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Welcome!

Hello, and welcome! This started a while back when I had the idea to write a Warrior Cats fanfiction based on Tui T. Sutherland's Wings of Fire: Darkstalker Legends. It has grown since then.

I wrote this when I was 12/13, and it's my first completed fanfiction, so some things are a bit dramatic and the characters aren't super well developed, but I think you'll still be able to enjoy the story despite this :D I'm pretty proud of it because it took me several months to complete and I feel like it's my first step to becoming a writer. With that being said, I wouldn't mind criticism as long as you're not being mean and/or just trolling me.

There might be some darker themes such as **death, depression,** and **mild gore.** If those things upset you, you might have a hard time reading. Just a warning!

I hope you enjoy! Thank you!

The cover is by me. Original image from soupoffun.com

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» Prologue «

The tabby kit saw a brilliant, golden light. A warm, fuzzy feeling surrounded him, making him feel safe, relaxed. He yearned for the light. He reached out a paw, wanting to touch it. The light expanded, filling his vision. The light kept growing, getting brighter and brighter and brighter...

Then color surrounded him. All different shades of greens and browns and blues. The color was even more wonderful than the light. He soaked it all in. It was all too beautiful and glorious.

He could feel something soft by his paws. He looked down and saw a shade of orange, ginger. The shape was fuzzy and soft. He looked to see where this strange, ginger thing had come from. He realized it was a tail, coming from a bigger, warmer ginger shape. He felt a burst of love toward it, and somehow, he just knew that this was his mother.

"You opened your eyes!" said the ginger shape excitedly, the sound coming out of her mouth bright, light, and energetic. "Thistleleap, come see!"

That's when the kit noticed a dark gray shape hanging around the shadows. The kit sat up, knowing this was his father and that he would love him as much as the ginger shape. But he felt a deep, stinging pain of sadness when no expression crossed the gray shape's face.

"Took him long enough," he said, his voice rough and tired.

The ginger shape, his mother, seemed a little offeneded. It made the kit feel a gloomier feeling toward his father.

"He's your son too," said the ginger shape.

The dark gray shape, who his mother had called Thistleleap, snorted. "He looks nothing like me, Brightwhisker."

The ginger shape, Brightwhisker, clenched her teeth. Anger flashed in her eyes, making the kit feel something dark and cold that he couldn't yet place.

"You can't say that of certainty yet. His eyes are still kit-blue, but once they become their natural color they might actually look like yours," she said, her voice hard but smooth.

Thistleleap looked disbelieving. "He looks too CloudClan. I don't see any BrookClan in him at all."

CloudClan? BrookClan? The words passed through the kit's head. He felt a yearning for knowledge and understanding. He wanted to know what this *CloudClan* and *BrookClan* were. All he knew how to do yet was listen.

There were several heartbeats of silence between the two. The ginger shape bent down and licked the kit's forehead slowly. She didn't look up as she took a pause. "I just wish that Buzzardkit could've experienced this moment too."

Sorrow actually dipped into Thistleleap's eyes. It disappeared quickly as he said, "We both knew she wouldn't survive. Milkleaf said herself that when she was kitted she was weak, barely able to keep her heart pounding."

"Yeah," breathed Brightwhisker, looking up again. "At least Waspkit survived."

Are they saying I had a sister? wondered the kit. He didn't feel any sorrow. How could he, if he didn't remember her?

Brightwhisker nudged the kit closer to her in a soft, loving way that the kit liked. *Yes. It's a good thing that Buzzardkit didn't survive, otherwise this attention would've been divided. Now it's all mine.*

Thistleleap sat up and got to his paws. "I'm going back to the border."

The queen's eyes filled with something, like sadness. The kit didn't like that look in his mother's eyes. "You're not leaving yet, are you?" she asked.

Thistleleap scowled. "I don't belong in CloudClan. I don't like being in this camp. It was fun to see our son, but now I'm leaving."

The ginger shape opened her mouth to speak, but Thistleleap was already out of the nursery, fading into the busy landscape of the world outside.

Brightwhisker sighed and drew her son in closer. "At least I have you."

The kit felt a flash of happiness. *Now all the attention is on me. This is just how it should be.*

He looked out of the nursery, where other cats had gathered around a cat sitting on a tall rock. From that moment he knew that was where he belonged. That would be his spot one day, sitting on the tall rock, ordering the other cats around.

As he watched the cat on the boulder, a flash crossed his vision. He saw another kit, one with mottled brown fur and bright hazel eyes. Sparks tingled under his fur. Right at that moment he knew that the kit he saw was connected to him. He knew that even though she wasn't close by, one day they would see each other.

It's our destiny, he thought. *We will rule this place... CloudClan. And maybe eventually this other clan, BrookClan.*

He felt a strong surge of ambition, knowing that some day they would stand on top of that rock together.

This is our world now.

A/N::

What do you guys think so far? I'd love any suggestions, and it would be a big help if you could give an editing tip in the comments!

While editing, I really fixed it up. It was exhausting and hard to write from a newborn kit's perspective of what was going on, since

he didn't know anything yet. I hope I captured his feelings right.

//Edited

» Chapter One «

[image]

"Mom! Mom! Can I go outside now?" squeaked a small brown kit. "I *promise* I won't get into *any* trouble. I'll be back in time for the ceremony."

"Absolutely not," said a tall brown cat between licks as she groomed her fur. "You know how I feel about you getting hurt."

"But I'll be quick! I want to see the camp," whined the kit.

"You'll see it when your ceremony starts."

Kestrelkit gave up, knowing it was useless. Morningleaf was very frantic and nervous ever since Darkpatch died. Kestrelkit had never been out of the hollow she was in now. She was even kitted in here. Morningleaf never let her out, and she was always by her side. The only time either of them got out was to make dirt, which only allowed Kestrelkit to catch a glimpse of the camp.

Morningleaf would get out to get fresh-kill, but she refused to let Kestrelkit tag along with her on the short trip. Apparently the short walk from the hollow to the fresh-kill pile was too far.

Now, after so many moons of waiting, Kestrelkit couldn't wait to be outside the hollow for the first time. Today was her apprentice ceremony, and now that she was an apprentice her mom couldn't keep her inside all the time.

She just couldn't wait until it was time. Not only was she excited to see the camp, but she was also anticipating the moment she would meet *him*.

It would be today. It had to be today. She could feel it. She could close her eyes and clearly see his ginger pelt, which was smooth and had only one feature: the dark tabby stripes that made him look so much tougher. His amber eyes burned like fire, but were also

clear with wisdom and understanding.

It would be today she'd meet him. She couldn't wait to hear his name. She had some ideas in mind based on his appearance. Tigerkit made sense from his color and stripes. Or possibly Lionkit, which for some reason didn't sound as cool. Firekit, perhaps. Waspkit. Bumblekit, which in her opinion seemed too soft of a name for him. Beekit. There were just so many names that made sense for him! Which one would it be?

She kept thinking about these things, along with what the camp would look like, up until it was time. She knew it was near when Morningleaf started giving her fur fierce licks. She was scolded several times for squirming too much, but she couldn't help it. Her whole life was about to change!

Finally, she was nudged out of the hollow. She bolted out and raced in through the dirtplace and barreled through the tunnel that led to camp.

She immediately took in the scents. She had been smelling them all the time, but now they were really strong and made the whole clan feel a lot closer. It was open to the sky, unlike the cramped hollow she had spent her whole life in. Trees lined around the border, keeping attackers out. Hollows and logs clearly were the dens, which were lined around the border the trees created. The whole area was much more open than she had imagined, the clearing smooth without a single pebble. The only thing was in the center of the camp. It was a huge boulder, big enough for three full grown cats to stand on. Underneath it was a small opening. Based on what she had heard, she realized it must've been the leader's den.

She felt a burst of excitement. It would be so much fun to meet all the other cats in her clan and play with the other apprentices. Especially *him*.

She looked back for her mother. Morningleaf padded up behind Kestrelkit and kept looking back and forth as though she expected an attacker to leap out of nowhere.

"Are you sure about this?" asked Morningleaf nervously. "If you're

scared, I can just tell the leader you're not ready and you can do it another day."

"Mom!" exclaimed Kestrelkit. "You're the only one who's worried. I'm excited."

Morningleaf gave a heavy sigh and followed Kestrelkit deeper into camp. Other cats started looking at them, some who had faces of shock and disbelief. Kestrelkit felt a moment of worry, wondering why they were looking at her like that. But she realized it wasn't her they were looking at, but her mom.

Kestrelkit felt a flash of irritation. What had her mom done? Was she going to ruin this day for her?

Morningleaf led her up in front of a tree with a huge hollow inside, similar to the one she had lived in, but much bigger. Inside it smelled of fresh milk and she heard some squeaking inside. This was the nursery. This was where she was supposed to grow up.

Next to her stood a small cat about her age. He had fluffy white fur and a giant gray splotch on his forehead. But what really captivated Kestrelkit were his eyes. His eyes were a beautiful, bright, sparkling blue. It reminded her of stars sparkling during the day, against a light blue sky instead of a dark blue one. But that was about the only interesting thing about him. He didn't look near as cool as *him*.

Bringing up the thought led Kestrelkit to look around for him. She was pretty sure he was supposed to have his ceremony today too. Where was he?

"Who are you?" suddenly asked the white cat next to her. Even his voice sounded pathetic, wimpy. Not strong at all. "I have never seen you before. Are you having your ceremony today too?"

"Firstly, I'm Kestrelkit. Secondly, yes I am."

"Oh," was all the cat said at first. Kestrelkit tried to hide the smirk that was pressing her lips. Everything about this cat was wimpy compared to the strong cat she was waiting for.

"I'm Rainkit," he finally said. He moved his bright blue eyes towards

her. "Why have I not seen you in the nursery?"

"My mom was scared or something," said Kestrelkit with a hint of disgust. "She kept me in a hollow my whole life until now."

He blinked. "Sorry. That sounds... strange."

Kestrelkit laughed hard. "Oh, yes. I suppose it was."

She liked how she had said *was.* She wouldn't be worrying about that anymore.

She waited until a spark finally ran up her spine. He was here! She could sense him coming from her right.

She looked over and leaned forward, anticipating the moment they'd share their first conversation. She closed her eyes and pictured him in her mind. She remembered that look. Then she opened them and waited to see what she saw.

He looked exactly how she had imagined. Same dull ginger fur and dark tabby stripes like a tiger. Same firey but clear amber eyes. The only thing she hadn't been able to picture correctly was his limbs, which were strong and rippling with muscle, which flexed with every step. He already had the legs of a warrior—and he hadn't even started training yet.

Then their eyes met.

And Kestrelkit felt sparks igniting beneath her pelt.

A/N::

So what do you think so far? What do you think will happen?
Also the photo above is by cat-patrysia on deviantart

//Edited

» Chapter Two «

[image]

The tom surged towards her, and Kestrelkit was too stunned to react. He was handsome, almost too handsome to be real. He seemed more like a StarClan cat.

Then the tom stood right in front of her. Kestrelkit felt sparks surging through her entire body, rippling up her spine, tail, whiskers, and limbs.

"Do you know me?" he asked. The sparks surged again. His voice was strong and commanding, just like a leader. Kestrelkit loved it.

"I've seen you in my dreams," said Kestrelkit, not knowing what else to say. The tom nodded.

"I'm Waspkit," he replied. *Waspkit.* That was one of the names she had thought of! She was right about something.

"Aren't you going to tell me yours?"

The sparks kept surging through Kestrelkit's body, making it hard to think. Did he feel the sparks too? His fur was fluffing up, so maybe he did.

Waspkit smiled. "Is it a hard one? 'Cause I'm sure I can figure it out."

"It's Kestrelkit," she said. The sparks diminished a little after saying that.

Waspkit grinned. "Well it's good to officially meet you. I wasn't sure if you were real or not, but now I know you are. Where have you been? I've never seen you in the nursery."

Kestrelkit sighed just for effect. "My mother was scared or stressed or something, so she kept me inside a hollow just by the

dirtplace all these moons. This is my first time out for something besides making dirt."

Waspkit laughed. It was a strong, healthy one. "Oh, I've seen that hollow before! To be honest I thought I felt something inside there, but I didn't bother looking. I must've felt you."

Rainkit cleared his throat. "Um, excuse me. What are you talking about? This doesn't make sense."

Kestrelkit and Waspkit turned to each other and rolled their eyes. Apparently both of them found Rainkit annoying.

Just then a horrible odor flew up Kestrelkit's nostrils. It smelled almost like a cat, like CloudClan, but much worse. It reaked something awful, she just couldn't pin point what it was.

It was coming off of a dark gray cat with eyes like Waspkit, strong like fire but clear at the same time. His shape didn't look the same as all the CloudClan cats. His pelt looked more sleek but thicker at the same time. His shape was wider but still appeared lean. It was peculiar to Kestrelkit.

Next to her, Waspkit groaned. "Just ignore him."

She turned to him. "Do you know who that is?"

Waspkit nodded. "Unfortunately. That's Thistleleap, my dad."

"Ohhhhh," said Kestrelkit. "Why does he look so different?"

"He's an ex-BrookClan cat," he said, the words coming out with a growl. There was something different about Waspkit now. Kestrelkit looked down and noticed he had his claws unsheathed and digging into the dirt, his tail was thrashing behind him.

She tried to think about what he had just said. BrookClan was a bordering clan from what she remembered. They were named so because their territory was more water than land and they survive off of the fish in the rivers, streams, and ponds in their territory. BrookClan cats were natural swimmers. Was that why Thistleleap was shaped differently? Did he have the body of a swimmer?

Did that mean that Waspkit is half BrookClan? The question that had popped into her head surprised Kestrelkit. She was curious and looked at him. He looked more like a CloudClan cat, but she noticed something different in his paws. Without trying to be noticeable, she squinted at them. They appeared thicker than any other paws, and there was something between his pads. Were those webs?

That's when she remembered that BrookClan cats had webs between their pads to make them better swimmers. Waspkit had them too. In CloudClan webs wouldn't be helpful, but having bigger paws might be.

Waspkit flicked her with his thick tail. "I just want you to know that I'm nothing like my father. I'm not a BrookClan cat. I'd never betray my clan like he did."

His eyes were big and sincere, but Kestrelkit didn't see the big idea of what he had said. "Oh, okay."

"Everyone gather around Grand Rock for a clan meeting!"

It was Beetlestar, the clan leader. He was just how Morningleaf had described. Sleek black, with white paws. Tall and commanding. In a strange way, he seemed like Waspkit.

Speaking of him, he was bouncing up and down beside her. "I'm about to start my journey to being clan leader!"

Kestrelkit laughed. "It's kind of soon to be thinking of that, isn't it? We're just becoming apprentices."

Waspkit scowled. "I'm not *thinking* of it. I *know* I'm destined to be the clan leader and you're destined to be my deputy."

This led Kestrelkit to giggle even more, and she noticed that Rainkit was hiding giggles as well.

"You might not believe it yet because you haven't seen me in action, but just wait until we start—"

Beetlestar raised his tail for silence, and a sudden hush fell over

the clan. Kestrelkit looked at them all in wonder. There were so many cats! She had no idea that the clan was so large. She suddenly felt as though she was just a small piece of the clan, small and insignificant.

But next to her Waspkit pumped his chest out as though seeing them all made him feel more powerful.

"We are here to name CloudClan's new apprentices," Beetlestar announced. "We all know we have been short on apprentices. I thank all the warriors who had to put up with doing some apprentice duties. But now CloudClan will be plentiful with apprentices!"

A few cats cheered.

"Waspkit, Kestrelkit, and Rainkit, please step up!"

All the eyes turned to them, making Kestrelkit feel even smaller. Waspkit walked up without a problem, puffing out his chest. He would've looked fierce and intimidating if he hadn't been smiling like a crazy idiot.

Kestrelkit walked up next. She felt a little smaller, but she realized she enjoyed being in the center of attention. Halfway to the Grand Rock she puffed out her chest like Waspkit.

Rainkit, on the other hand, had more issues. He walked crouched down, taking small steps. He was clearly shy and avoided making eye contact with anyone. Inwardly, Kestrelkit rolled her eyes at the wimpy kit.

"Waspkit, Kestrelkit, and Rainkit," Beetlestar addressed. Kestrelkit was practically bouncing up and down. "Each of you have reached the age of six moons, and it is time for you to be apprenticed. From this day on, until you receive your warrior names, you will be known as Wasp-paw, Kestrelpaw, and Rainpaw. Wasp-paw..." Beetlestar shifted his gaze from all of them and focused down on Wasp-paw, who seemed to enjoy being under the leader's gaze. "Your mentor will be Cindertooth. I hope Cindertooth will pass all he knows down to you."

Beetlestar turned to a shaggy gray tom who padded up. He looked strong, a perfect choice to make strong Wasp-paw stronger. "Cindertooth, you are ready to take on an apprentice. You have received excellent training from Breezestripe, and you have shown yourself to be loyal and courageous. You will be the mentor of Wasppaw, and I expect you to pass on all you know to Wasppaw."

Cindertooth padded up and reluctantly touched noses with Wasppaw, who also looked reluctant to do so. Kestrelpaw almost smirked. The two tough toms were perfect for each other.

Beetlestar turned his green gaze to Kestrelpaw, who squeaked with excitement. She couldn't wait to find out who her mentor was.

"Kestrelpaw, your mentor will be..." He paused for a second. "Amberheart."

Kestrelpaw smiled so big she felt as though it could touch her ears.

"Amberheart, you are ready to take on an apprentice. You have received excellent training from Yellowfur, and you have shown yourself to be smart and skillful. You will be the mentor of Kestrelpaw, and I expect you to pass on all you know to Kestrelpaw."

A lean, amber she-cat with golden eyes padded up beside Kestrelpaw. They touched noses, soft and gentle, calming the sparks that were still igniting under Kestrelpaw's pelt.

Rainpaw was assigned to Crowpelt, who touched noses. But Kestrelpaw barely paid attention. Her and Wasppaw were turned to eachother, looking into each other's eyes.

"This is how it starts," he whispered. "This is how we start our path to ruling the clan."

A/N::

So now we have a little more character development, and we know who this "him" is. We also know who all their mentors are. Let's see what happens!

The image above is by NevCroven on deviantart

//Edited

» Chapter Three «

[image]

"Wasppaw! Rainpaw! Kestrelpaw! Wasppaw! Rainpaw! Kestrelpaw!"

The chorus rang out through the clan; a sea of cheering cats. Cheering for *them*.

It made Kestrelpaw feel proud. Important. She was already hitting off on a good note.

It took several minutes before the clan parted and started back on their clanly duties. The only cats left were their mentors. Amberheart and Crowpelt looked excited, but Cindertooth looked as though he felt like an apprentice was a waste of time.

"Today you will just be getting a tour of the territory. You will see the borders and learn to recognize the scent of other clans," said Amberheart with a teacher tone.

Crowpelt nodded his dark gray, almost black head. "Yes. Tomorrow you'll start your apprentice duties, so don't get too excited."

Kestrelpaw wasn't sure what apprentice duties were, but she hoped they were fun. The tone Crowpelt said it with made it sound as though it wasn't worth looking forward to.

The three mentors looked at each other. "Well, I'll take Kestrelpaw to the GladeClan border," said Amberheart. "If you guys want to take your apprentices to—"

"Me and Kestrelpaw stay together," Wasppaw interrupted sternly. "Or else... I'll claw you!"

Cindertooth smirked as though he found the idea ridiculous. Wasppaw shot him a withering glare.

"Alright!" said Amberheart. "Let's not start any fights. Let's just all go together."

Kestrelpaw was flooded with joy. She couldn't wait to see the territory.

All six of them set off, first trekking toward the GladeClan border east of camp. Kestrelpaw was amazed with all the sights. Prey was scurrying through the trees and earth, rustling the branches. There were so many trees, yet the sky was still open to the clouds. She never really imagined what the territory *outside* the camp was like. She hadn't really thought there was much more land other than the camp. Now she realized their land was much more wide and vast than she could've ever imagined. Everything felt alive. Looking at it all gave her a burst of excitement.

She flicked Wasppaw in the face with her tail. "Race you to that oak!"

As soon as the words came out of her mouth, Wasppaw was off, strongly bounding over there with his muscular limbs. Kestrelpaw had a moments hesitation after Wasppaw, giving her a disadvantage right off the bat. She kicked out her legs and tried to go as fast as she could, but she had never gone at a pace faster than a walk and she found herself tired quickly. Nevertheless, she kept going even though it was clear who was going to win.

A white cat appeared in the corner of her eye. She was surprised to see Rainpaw racing too, and actually doing much better than Kestrelpaw.

Wasppaw was the first to reach the oak. Rainpaw made it just mere seconds before Kestrelpaw. Kestrelpaw was out of breath, her legs feeling numb. Wasppaw looked completely unfazed, and Rainpaw didn't look nearly as tired as her. She had never expected Rainpaw to beat her at anything. The apprentice looked so weak. He was giving her a smug look in which Kestrelpaw returned with a malicious glare.

Wasppaw was prancing on the tips of his webbed toes, smiling wide and showing his teeth. "Aw, yeah! You guys didn't stand a chance. Looks like I already have super-speed skills."

Kestrelpaw playfully cuffed him on the ear. "Stop showing off!"

"Well I can't help it if I'm just naturally amazing," he smugly said back. He striked a pose, standing with his chin up, chest out, one paw raised, and his hind paws back, showing off his muscles.

"Yeah, yeah!" said Kestrelpaw with a smile. He might have been just a little arrogant and a show off, but in a way that made her like him even more.

When their mentors finally caught up they started trekking towards the border again. The trees started dissipating, opening the sky up more. The scent of fresh grass hung in the air, mixed with the scent of cats. They were nearing the GladeClan border.

From what she had heard, GladeClan was the friendliest clan, always welcoming and only fighting as a last resort. Their territory didn't have many trees and was mostly just fields of grass. Kestrelpaw couldn't imagine living without the shelter of trees.

Their mentors stopped them at the border. A small stream trickled through the land, forming the perfect border. The stream was small so that a new apprentice could just leap across, yet it was wide enough that you couldn't just step right over. The stream was surprisingly fast, splashing droplets of water over its borders. Kestrelpaw felt one land on her nose.

"We could just wade right through it as though it's not even there!" For some reason, Wasppaw sounded very excited about that.

"No," said Amberheart. "It's actually a lot deeper than it looks. A cat your size would drown trying to wade through."

Wasppaw snorted as though he didn't believe it, but didn't argue.

Next they started heading north, towards the BrookClan border. They followed along the edge of the stream. Crowpelt said the stream was very long, traveling all the way into BrookClan territory. At some point a GladeClan patrol passed by on the other side. They actually seemed like they wanted to talk and they were thrilled to hear that CloudClan had new apprentices.

"GladeClan cats," muttered Cindertooth after they left.

Kestrelpaw was surprised at how long their border was with GladeClan. It seemed to stretch on forever. Finally, the stream started to curve away and they started heading deeper into the trees. The GladeClan border finally ended and a new smell filled the air. It smelled just like Thistleleap, an awful odor. GladeClan smelled bad, but BrookClan smelled a lot worse. The stream turned and headed straight into the territory and their mentors had to stop them from accidentally crossing the border.

"See that tree?" asked Amberheart, gesturing to a fallen tree with her tail.

"Yes," said Kestrelpaw.

"That's the border. Don't ever pass the tree."

"We call it the Fallen Oak," added Crowpelt.

After exploring that, they headed west, towards the MarshClan border. MarshClan lived in the deeper, darker part of the forest. Morningleaf had told Kestrelpaw that since they spend most of their time in darkness their hearts darkened too, making them the grumpiest and unfriendliest clan. They showed no mercy to anyone who crossed their border, not even to harmless kittypets.

By the time they got close enough to smell it the sun was setting and the temperature was dropping. They decided to head back to camp after seeing the border.

The forest got denser and more cramped from trees. The air smelled fowl, even worse than GladeClan and BrookClan combined. Kestrelpaw found herself gagging.

"Doesn't it smell lovely?" joked Crowpelt.

"Just as lovely as you smell," replied Wasppaw. Crowpelt looked at him as though he couldn't figure out if he was joking or not. Finally, he turned his head forward again.

Amberheart stopped them and pointed to the border with her tail. It was a small cliff, but wide enough that Kestrelpaw wasn't sure if she could leap across. There was a fallen boulder that stretched across

and worked as a bridge if they ever needed to cross the border.

They started heading back to camp. Amberheart said they'd explore the south side of the territory tomorrow.

"Can we start training instead?" asked Wasppaw.

"Usually you start by learning your territory," said Amberheart.

Wasppaw narrowed his eyes. "But I want to start training *tomorrow*!" he complained, sounding a little like a tired kit.

"Sorry, but you need to see the whole territory before you can start training," said Amberheart, sounding impatient.

"Then can we see the rest of the territory now?"

"It's too late," said Crowpelt, jumping in. "The sun is already starting to set. It'd be dark by the time we get back to camp if we stay out here any longer."

"I don't care. I want to start training tomorrow," said Wasppaw, thrashing his tail.

"Well, maybe if we have time we can start tomorrow," said Amberheart, padding away quickly before Wasp-paw could argue further. He snorted. "I would be a much better mentor."

Kestrelpaw and Rainpaw each picked up a mouse and Wasppaw picked up a thrush from the fresh-kill pile once they got back to camp. They ate together quietly. They didn't say a word, making it awkward.

Night had fallen, and Kestrelpaw ached with tiredness. She couldn't wait to go to the hollow and tell her mom about her day. Then curl up in her soft fur.

She started heading in the direction of the dirtplace.

"Where are you going?" asked Wasppaw, coming up beside her.

"To the hollow," said Kestrelpaw, feeling an upset pang in her

stomach as she said it. Part of her wanted to go back to the hollow, but another part of her didn't. Part of her wanted to stay with Wasp-paw.

"But you can sleep in the apprentices' den now, right?"

"I'm not sure," said Kestrelpaw, sliding a glance over at the dirtplace tunnel. "But I'll do it anyway."

Neither of them said a word as they picked two empty nests right next to eachother and curled up, tail folding over their paws.

Kestrelpaw felt happy, happy to be an apprentice and happy to be together with Wasppaw, but at the same time she felt lonely. She missed her mother's soft fur, and she missed how her mother would lick her cheek before bed. She wished she had talked to her more earlier today.

Feeling tired, weary, and sad, she drifted off to sleep and fell into a deep dream.

A/N::

I hate this chapter. It was long and boring and had a bad ending. It was just... ugh. I spent like an hour editing it and couldn't get it how I wanted. After this it will (hopefully) pick up speed. I just had to describe what the territory was like.

Oh, and I included a map I drew of the territory. I didn't spend a lot of time on it, so it's just okay.

//Edited

» Chapter Four «

Kestrelpaw was in the center of camp. Wasppaw, who looked much bigger now, stood on top of the Grand Rock, looking handsome and intimidating.

Kestrelpaw felt stiff. Something didn't feel right. Her body wasn't moving when she wanted it to, and her skin felt heavy on her shoulders. It felt like she was covered in something tough, making her feel like she was trapped in someone else's body.

Beside her, two kits were pawing at her side. One had silky brown fur and hazel eyes, just like Kestrelpaw. The other was dull ginger with dark tabby stripes like Wasppaw.

"Mommy! Mommy! Can we go outside of camp?" asked the ginger one. Her voice was surprisingly soft compared to her tough looks.

What shocked Kestrelpaw most were the words "*mommy*." *Could this be a vision of my future*? she wondered.

Words flowed out of her mouth like a river, coming out with strength and gentleness. "No. You must wait until you're apprentices." It wasn't her who spoke them, but someone else. A different Kestrelpaw.

"But why?" asked the silky brown one, her voice just as soft as her sister's.

"Because it's part of the rules. You can't go outside of camp until you're apprenticed," Kestrelpaw replied. The words were leaving her mouth against her will, flowing out like a river.

"But why? Dad's the leader, he could change the rules," said the ginger one.

A laugh came from behind them. Older Wasppaw came padding

up. He was big, his legs ripped and muscular and his head high. "Have you seen Tigerkit? I haven't seen him all day."

"No, I haven't," replied Kestrelpaw, unable to stop the words from falling out.

Just then something knocked into her left side. A small ginger tabby kit was pawing at her. "Did I surprise you? I bet I surprised you," he said. She was shocked to see that he was like an exact replica of Wasppaw, just smaller with tiny kit paws.

"Yes you did," said Kestrelpaw, the words coming out with a purr. Suddenly, she was engulfed with a strong surge of love. It made her believe that she would die to protect these kits. It made her want to wrap her tail around them and never release them. But her body moved away from them, heading off into the forest....

--

Light was pouring into the cozy hollow. Kestrelpaw blinked her eyes open as she stretched. Her legs felt stiff as she extended them out, one at a time. *Where's Morningleaf?* she wondered, confused for a moment. *Oh, that's right. I'm an apprentice now. This is the apprentices' den.*

The nest where Wasppaw had laid down in the night before was empty. Kestrelpaw looked around the den. Rainpaw was still curled up in a tight ball; Violetpaw, another apprentice, was twisting and turning as she slept; Hawkpaw was awake, stretching like Kestrelpaw. There was no Wasppaw.

"Have you seen Wasppaw?" asked Kestrelpaw.

Hawkpaw just seemed to notice that she was awake for the first time. His mouth stretched open in a huge yawn. "Oh, Wasppaw," he said, still looking half-asleep. "The new apprentice. No, I haven't seen him."

Kestrelpaw felt a flash annoyance. Then she noticed something tickling her pelt. The sparks. She could feel Wasppaw. She closed eyes and extended her senses. She could see him, just outside of

camp. She could feel something deep within her drawing her to him. She knew where he was.

She started padding out of the hollow, careful not to step on one of the sleeping cats. Outside the sun was just rising in the distance, casting shadows over the hills and trees. Out of the corner of her eye she saw the deputy, a dark brown she-cat named Briarwing, talking to Beetlestar, most likely addressing patrols. There were a few senior warriors padding around the camp, relaxing and talking before starting their day.

Kestrelpaw followed the sparks, where her paws led her. She exited through the dirtplace tunnel and padded on through the trees. *What in StarClan are you doing up so early?* she thought. *Why not sleep in?* Finally, she saw his tabby ginger pelt standing out against the dense green forest.

Wasppaw must've sensed her because he turned around and greeted her with a flick of his tail. He had a scratch on his left eye, not too deep but still startling. His fur stood in all different directions, and his eyes were sunken like he was tired.

"What happened to you?" asked Kestrelpaw, disgust edging her voice. *Why would he be out so early?*

"I wanted to start training," said Wasppaw. "So I trained on my own last night."

"How did you get that scratch?" asked Kestrelpaw.

"I was running through the forest and a branch scraped me." He seemed slightly embarrassed.

"Have you seen Milkleaf yet?" she asked. Milkleaf was the clan medicine cat. She was really good at treating anything. Greencough? Gone within a few days. An infection? Not a sweat. A scratch? Not a problem for her. She was the best medicine cat the clans have ever seen.

"No," replied Wasppaw, swishing his thick tail. "I don't need a medicine cat."

Kestrelpaw flicked her ear but didn't question further. There was no use wasting energy arguing whether or not he needed a medicine cat. "I had a dream last night," she began.

"Ooh! Was it from StarClan?" asked Wasppaw, leaning forward, immediately intrigued.

"I think so," said Kestrelpaw with a shrug. "I think I saw our future... we had three kits."

Excitement lit his eyes. "What were their names? How many toms?"

"We had two she-cats and one tom," said Kestrelpaw, feeling a surge of love as she said them. "I didn't catch the she-cats names, but the tom was named Tigerkit."

"That's wonderful!" said Wasppaw, excitement lighting his gaze. "I can't wait for them to be born."

Kestrelpaw wondered if she should tell him that he was going to be leader, but something held her back. Somehow, she felt that telling him now would be bad.

But why?

--

The three apprentices, Wasppaw, Rainpaw, and Kestrelpaw padded through the forest with their mentors. They were heading south to see the Unclaimed Territory, the area of land that didn't belong to any clan. Since Wasp-paw kept begging and begging, Cindertooth and Crowpelt finally decided to teach them how to hunt on the way.

"You need to be light on your paws," instructed Crowpelt. "And crouch low to the ground so you won't be seen."

"When will we learn fighting moves?" asked Wasppaw.

Crowpelt sighed. "We'll learn how to fight tomorrow."

They kept padding through the forest. Kestrelpaw wanted to stop, but at the same time she didn't want to seem like she was weak. Her paws were aching like crazy.

"This is the end of our territory," said Amberheart, stopping them. Kestrelpaw sat down, relieved for a break. Rainpaw sat down next to her, but Wasp-paw remained standing.

"When the clans first moved here, they had to claim their territory," said Amberheart. "All four clans wanted this area, the Unclaimed Territory, for its large amount of prey and shelter. They all fought a huge battle for it, and many lives were lost. At last they decided that the area belonged to no one, and decreed it the Unclaimed Territory. Now the Moonboulders and the Star Tree are in this land, where we speak to StarClan and hold Gatherings."

"Yes," said Crowpelt. "A historic battle took place here. There could be bodies buried beneath our paws right now."

Kestrelpaw looked down at the ground, wondering who could be underneath her right now.

"*Now* we can go hunting," said Crowpelt, shooting a meaningful glance at Wasp-paw.

They traversed over to the MarshClan border, where prey was plentiful.

"Remember what I told you," said Crowpelt. "Crouch low to the ground and be light on your paws. And watch your surroundings. You don't want to accidentally step on a twig and scare the prey away."

"And *don't* cross the border," said Amberheart. "We've had tensions in the past with MarshClan. We don't want to stir those up again."

Cindertooth just had an amused look on his face.

The apprentices took off, seeking out prey. Kestrelpaw rotated her ears and listened. She could hear rustling, but she wasn't sure if it was prey or just the wind. She tasted the air. *Is that mouse?* She

couldn't be sure. Still, she started heading in the direction she scented it from.

Then she saw it, small and brown-furred. She immediately crouched down, hoping the mouse didn't see her. It kept nibbling on something, minding its own business. Kestrelpaw slowly crept forward. She stayed light on her paws, trying to make herself weightless. She made no sound as she moved forward.

Kestrelpaw stopped for a moment. Should she pound now? She tried to remember what their mentors had said about pouncing. She planted her hind legs in the ground and kicked up, launching through the air.

She landed just mouse-lengths away from the mouse. The mouse, seeing the big cat that had tried to stalk it, started scurrying away. Kestrelpaw chased after it, filled with energy and excitement. She had never felt so free or happy before in her life. A smile was on her face.

The mouse raced across a big boulder, and Kestrelpaw followed. The mouse leapt off the boulder and ran into a small hole in a nearby tree. Kestrelpaw ran over to it, but it was too late. She reached a paw through the hole, but she couldn't feel the mouse. She decided to give up and try again.

Then she noticed something was wrong. The air was filled with a different scent, MarshClan scent. She looked behind her and saw the giant boulder stretched over the cliff. She had crossed it.

Three big cats suddenly leaped out from nowhere, their fur bristled and hackles raised. Kestrelpaw's eyes widened with surprise.

"Trespasser!" snarled the biggest, an ugly brown tom with a long scar running down his snout.

Kestrelpaw flicked her ears, trying to look calm. "I was just leaving."

"You were hunting in our territory," growled a dark gray tom

with slobber running down his chin. "And now you will pay."

A/N::

I hope this chapter makes up for the previous chapter. This chapter was still pretty boring until the end. I tried to end it on a cliffhanger, but by doing that it turned out sort of cliche. Sorry! Hopefully it will be less cliche after this.

//Edited

» Chapter Five «

[image]

"I don't see how you can fight me. I'm much faster than you," said Kestrelpaw, sticking her tongue out. She tried to act brave. Unbothered by this. But deep down she was terrified; she fought to make her face look calm, maybe even a little happy.

"We're going to take you to Stormstar," said the brown one. "Then he will decide how many scars you'll have."

The three MarshClan toms took a few steps closer to her. Kestrelpaw temporarily forgot she was supposed to act brave and took a few steps back.

"You guys don't look like you can fight me," said Kestrelpaw. "You might need some reinforcements." Kestrelpaw knew that if she could convince them they needed reinforcements, at least one will have to go and get them. Then there would just be two left, and perhaps she could fight her way out then.

"You're an apprentice and a lousy hunter," the third one spoke up for the first time. He looked the least threatening out of all of them, but he still looked terrifying with his ragged gray fur and wild green eyes. "I think the three of us will do just fine."

They took more steps forward, and Kestrelpaw took more steps backward. She could feel the cliff behind her. Could she jump across? She didn't dare turn her head back and away from the toms to check.

"Come on," hissed the brown one. He unsheathed his claws and slowly padded towards Kestrelpaw. She couldn't back away much further without slipping off the edge.

"Come on," she said. "Let's talk this out."

A ginger shape hurtled past her and barreled into the brown tom.

They tangled together. The other two took steps closer to him as though unsure if he needed help.

Then the brown tom pinned the ginger tom on the ground. It was Wasppaw!

That did it. Kestrelpaw felt sparks ignite deep inside her, like a rampaging fire. Everything happened in a blur. Suddenly she was hurtling through the air, right at the brown tom. She raked her claws down his back, cutting open flesh. Hot and sticky blood slid onto her claws. She backed away from the tom, surprised. *Did I just do that?*

"Timberthorn!" yowled the gray tom. "Do you need help?"

"Yes you toad-brains!" snapped the brown tom, Timberthorn. "Get that foolish CloudClan apprentice!"

The two other MarshClan toms leaped at Kestrelpaw. Kestrelpaw felt anxiety clawing at her belly but pushed it away. *I can't be afraid. I need to focus.*

Last second she leaped out of the way. The MarshClan toms looked confused once they landed, looking around.

"She's right there!" snarled Timberthorn. "Do you have bees in your brains? Get her, you—"

He was cut off when Wasppaw kicked up with his hind-legs. It distracted Timberthorn for a second and in that moment Wasppaw was able to slip out from his grip.

"Go," yowled Wasppaw. He started racing towards the boulder bridge, and Kestrelpaw followed behind him.

"Don't let them escape," called Timberthorn. Then the two other toms started racing after them.

"Hurry," said Wasppaw. "We can make it."

Yes, thought Kestrelpaw. *We're going to make it. StarClan wouldn't let us be caught. We're special.*

Wasppaw reached the bridge and helped Kestrelpaw haul herself onto the boulder. They raced across the surface and leaped off on the other side.

The three MarshClan toms stopped, realizing that they couldn't cross the border.

"Foxhearts!" Timberthorn spat at them from across the cliff. His fur was bristled and his hackles were raised. "We're telling Stormstar! We're telling him that CloudClan thinks they can do whatever they want again."

Wasppaw flicked Kestrelpaw with his tail. "Come on! We need to go before they decide to cross the border."

Kestrelpaw nodded. Before they raced away she caught one more look at the angry toms. She felt guilt. But why? They just did what had to be done. If they hadn't attacked them, they would be suffering. But she felt bad. She never dreamed of hurting someone —at least not this bad. She only wanted to fight playfully, not for real. Not with unsheathed claws.

She raced after Wasppaw, through the forest. She wanted to forget about crossing the border, fighting with the MarshClan toms, ripping through flesh....

She was so distracted that she didn't realize Wasppaw had stopped. She saw a flash of gray fur in front of her and stopped right before running into it.

"What happened?" hissed a voice in front of her. She looked up and saw brown eyes narrowing down on her. It was Cindertooth, Wasppaw's mentor.

"I was hunting," said Kestrelpaw, "and accidentally crossed the border. Three MarshClan toms almost tore me to shreds."

Cindertooth's tail lashed. "We showed you the border. You should've known better." He turned to Wasppaw. "And why are you all scratched up?"

"I felt Kestrelpaw and I knew she was in trouble," said Wasppaw.

"So I raced across the border as fast as I could and clawed all those toms' eyes out." Inwardly, Kestrelpaw rolled her eyes. *You weren't exactly* that *heroic.*

"You shouldn't have crossed the border," growled Cindertooth. "Neither of you. You must learn from your mistakes, so you will be punished."

"I think we've already been punished enough," the words came out of Kestrelpaw's mouth before she could stop. "We had to fight those MarshClan toms... and if it weren't for Wasppaw, I'd probably be getting beat up by Stormstar right now." She flashed a look of gratitude at Wasppaw.

"That doesn't count," said Cindertooth. "I'm taking you to Beetlestar."

They were led back into camp and into Beetlestar's den. Beetlestar immediately looked worried once he laid eyes on them. "What happened?"

"These two," said Cindertooth, flicking his tail at them,"wanted to practice fighting. So they crossed the MarshClan border and tried to battle some MarshClan cats."

"That's not true!" cried Wasppaw. "Kestrelpaw was hunting and accidentally crossed the border. I came to help her and fought off those toms."

Beetlestar frowned as though not sure who to believe.

"No matter what, they shouldn't have crossed the border at all," said Cindertooth. "Even by mistake."

Beetlestar nodded. "That is true. You must be aware of your surroundings."

"WHAT!" yelled Wasppaw. "Cindertooth is lying. We didn't mean to cross the border. I *did* want to learn some fighting moves, but I didn't want to cross the border."

Beetlestar flicked his tail. His decision was made. "I don't care

which story is true. As warriors you will need to be aware of your surroundings. You two might have cost us our peace with MarshClan as a result of your carelessness. You must be taught a lesson."

Kestrelpaw looked at Wasppaw, who was trembling with rage and glaring at Beetlestar, then at Cindertooth, who was smiling smugly. Kestrelpaw wished she was close enough to Cindertooth to cuff his ear off with unsheathed claws. So instead, she stuck her tongue out at him.

"For the next moon," said Beetlestar, "neither of you may leave the camp."

"What!" cried Wasppaw. "You can't do that. We just got apprenticed!"

"And clearly you're not ready to leave the camp," he said.

"Well, then punish me, but not Kestrelpaw," said Wasppaw. Kestrelpaw looked at him, surprised. *He's willing to give up warrior training for me. He* really *wants to learn how to fight, and he's willing to give that up for me.*

"I admire your selflessness," said Beetlestar, "but both of you must be punished so you will learn from your mistakes."

Wasppaw and Kestrelpaw padded out of the den, Cindertooth smiling smugly and annoyingly beside them. If a tree suddenly fell on him and crushed him, Kestrelpaw wouldn't feel sorry for him.

Wasppaw turned to her. "I can't believe Cindertooth," he growled. "One day I'll get back at him."

Kestrelpaw nodded. "When you do, let me in too."

He nodded. She could feel his anger rising. "When I become leader, he will be sorry."

He padded away, stalking towards the fresh-kill pile. Kestrelpaw felt the sparks becoming calmer in her fur.

Something had changed between her and Wasppaw. Before she knew they were supposed to be together, but before today she just felt like they were friends, not feeling any of those special feelings towards him. Now she actually felt it. Now she was truly in love with him.

A/N::

Hey guys! I hope this chapter brought some of the action into the story that it was lacking.

I hope you guys are enjoying the story so far! :D Please leave any predictions in the comments.

That awesome photo at the top is by PoppyThePussyCat :3

//Edited

» Chapter Six «

[image]

The moon of Wasppaw and Kestrelpaw being confined to camp has ended. Today, they would finally start warrior training again.

Kestrelpaw padded out of the apprentice's den, excited to be able to run through the forest again. She stretched her legs; she couldn't wait to feel freedom again.

Although, the camp didn't match her mood. It was gloomy and silent. Beetlestar, Briarwing, and Cherrypaw were bent down by Milkleaf's body. The medicine cat had died when an old, dying tree fell on top of her while she was out gathering herbs. The clan was heartbroken that their wise medicine cat was gone. Kestrelpaw hadn't known Milkleaf that well, but she too felt a pang knowing she was gone. Her apprentice, Cherrypaw, would have to take charge of being a full medicine cat early.

Luckily, Milkleaf managed to help deliver Bumbleheart's kits before she died. The clan now had three new additions: Lionkit, Breezekit, and Cedarkit.

Wasppaw padded up next to Kestrelpaw with a grin on his face. Over the last moon Kestrelpaw and Wasppaw had grown close. They had pressed muzzles together under the moonlight when no one had been looking. Now every time she saw him her heart would beat with happiness.

"Ready?" he asked.

"Ready," Kestrelpaw replied. She was ready to start training again.

--

Together they padded through the forest after their mentors. Today they would be battle training. Wasppaw had bounced with joy

when he heard that.

"Today all the apprentices will be training together," said Amberheart. She gestured to the two other apprentices, Violetpaw and Hawkpaw. The two were apprentices for a while before Rainpaw, Kestrelpaw, and Wasppaw. They already had a lot more battle training. Nevertheless, Kestrelpaw felt ready to train with them.

Rainpaw had practiced fighting before too, since he hadn't been confined to camp for an entire moon. Kestrelpaw wanted to show that she was a better fighter than him even with less experience.

"I want the three of you to watch Violetpaw and Hawkpaw before we start," said Amberheart. "Watch their form and skills."

Next to her, Wasppaw dug his claws into the ground, either with impatience or excitement. Maybe both.

Amberheart turned to Violetpaw and Hawkpaw. "Demonstrate," she said with a nod.

Immediately, the two pounced on eachother. For a second Hawkpaw was on top of Violetpaw, digging his sheathed paws into her, pretending they were unsheathed. Suddenly, Violetpaw kicked her hind legs up into his stomach, throwing him off.

Hawkpaw darted back after her, but Violetpaw was already ready and swiped her paw across his face. Using the second she had gained, Violetpaw leaped on top of him and pinned him down. She spread herself out, holding one paw on his chest, one paw on his stomach, and two paws to hold his legs down so he couldn't get up. In a real battle, she could easily bite down on his neck from where she stood.

Amberheart nodded to the three younger apprentices. "Did you see how Violetpaw did that?"

The three of them nodded.

"Good. You're going to try that in a bit."

"Yes!" cheered Wasppaw, giving a little bounce.

Kestrelpaw smiled at Wasppaw, but inwardly she was a little nervous. She could still remember how her claws had shredded into the MarshClan cats' pelts. She glanced over at Rainpaw, wanting to see his expression. He was staring in wonder at Violetpaw, watching her and Hawkpaw continue practicing. He watched her swipe her paw, leap, and jump. His blue eyes were sparkling.

"Whoo hoo," said Kestrelpaw, flicking her tail in front of his face. "Don't look at her like that."

Rainpaw blinked as though surprised. "Why not?"

Kestrelpaw rolled her eyes. "Because she's out of your league. Don't you see her fighting? She's way better than you. Someone like you could never be close to her."

Rainpaw blinked as though hurt, making Kestrelpaw feel a twinge of guilt. Now that the words were out, she realized they did sound a bit harsh.

But part of it was true. Violetpaw was strong and much better than Rainpaw. She was fast and strong. Quick. Smart. She had gray and white fur with the deepest, darkest green eyes. Her shape was lithe yet her limbs looked strong.

"Kestrelpaw and Wasp-paw, why don't you try fighting first," said Crowpelt. "Try to mimick what Violetpaw did."

The two padded forward, facing each other. Kestrelpaw could feel Wasppaw's pelt sparking with excitement. She was excited too, though she was a little nervous at the same time. She didn't want to hurt Wasp-paw, but she wanted to look good in front of the other apprentices, specifically Rainpaw.

Crowpelt flicked his tail, beginning the fight. Wasppaw immediately launched himself at Kestrelpaw, knocking her over with his weight. He pinned her to the ground. Kestrelpaw tried to kick her legs up like Violetpaw had, but Wasp-paw had pinned her down. He raised a paw, unsheathed, and clawed her shoulder.

"Stop!" cried Crowpelt. "Stop!"

Wasppaw looked over at him as though confused.

"We don't train with unsheathed claws," he said chastisingly. "It's the rule."

Cindertooth, who was standing next to him, had a smile on his face as though he enjoyed it.

"Well that's mouse-brained," said Wasppaw. "We won't be ready to fight with unsheathed claws when we have to."

Crowpelt flicked his ears, turning away as though he didn't want to waste more time with the subject. "We don't hurt our clanmates."

Wasppaw scowled and got off of Kestrelpaw. "Wasppaw, try again with Rainpaw," said Amberheart.

Kestrelpaw padded over to the side and Rainpaw took her place. Even though she knew Wasppaw would win, she was excited to see if Rainpaw could fight.

Crowpelt flicked his tail and the two started fighting. Wasppaw knocked Rainpaw down easily. Wasppaw had him pinned to the ground, but somehow Rainpaw managed to twist his way out from under him and swiped a paw over his shoulder as though his claws were unsheathed. Wasppaw turned around and leaped at him. They tumbled through the dirt and tussled. The two swiped at each other. Rainpaw was actually much better than Kestrelpaw had expected.

Then she noticed something red dripping on the ground. At first she was confused, then she realized it was coming from Rainpaw. He was bleeding.

Wasppaw suddenly knocked him over and pinned him down. He started swiping his claws over Rainpaw's belly. Rainpaw looked surprised and howled in pain.

"Stop!" cried Crowpelt. "Stop! Stop!"

Wasppaw flicked his ears signaling that he had heard, but didn't stop. A look of pride washed over his face as he placed a scar over Rainpaw's muzzle.

"Stop!" cried Amberheart, taking a step closer. Wasp-paw kept swiping his claws on Rainpaw. He was howling in pain, red droplets splattering on the dirt beneath him.

"This is how I take out opponents in battle," Wasppaw said.

Crowpelt and Amberheart raced forward, but Cindertooth blocked their way.

"Cindertooth, let us through!" yelled Crowpelt. "We have to stop him."

Cindertooth shook his head. "I'd like to see if this apprentice has the strength and skill to finish the job," he said, his eyes glittering with excitement.

Wasppaw wasn't going to stop. Kestrelpaw hated the howls of pain coming from Rainpaw. The young apprentice was getting pummeled.

Kestrelpaw couldn't take it. The mentors couldn't stop Wasppaw. No one could. He wouldn't listen to anyone except for her.

"Wasppaw, stop!" called Kestrelpaw.

A/N::

Any thoughts on the apprentices? I personally like Rainpaw, Violetpaw, and Hawkpaw for some reason. :| I'm going to try to give Hawkpaw more character development. In the first draft this is pretty much the only time he's mentioned, so as I'm editing I'm going to give him more appearances.

The gif above is from julien douvier

//Edited

» Chapter Seven «

Kestrelpaw remembered seeing Rainpaw in the medicine den, looking weaker than ever, cobwebs covering his wounds. He smelled like herbs and remedies. He kept twitching as he slept as though he was having a nightmare.

Cherrynose, the new medicine cat, was stressed out. She had only two moons of training before Milkleaf had died. She was having a hard time taking the new responsibilities. Kestrelpaw felt bad for her.

Kestrelpaw sat up and climbed out of the apprentice's den, yawning as she did so. She wasn't sure how to feel about Wasppaw right now. She wanted to like him and be happy, go back to playing, but at the same time she felt couldn't stop thinking about Rainpaw whenever she saw him.

Wasppaw, Amberheart, and Crowpelt were already waiting for her by the dirtplace tunnel. As she padded up, she made sure to distance herself from Wasp-paw a bit.

"Today will be a free day," said Crowpelt. "You can go anywhere you want and do anything you want. Just stay within the territory."

"Be back by sundown," said Amberheart.

Wasppaw looked at Kestrelpaw excitedly, sparks flying off of his pelt. Kestrelpaw smiled, though she would have to make sure to talk to him about Rainpaw.

"Your letting them have a free day?" snarled a nasty voice. Kestrelpaw turned around to see Cindertooth.

"What is it, Cindertooth?" asked Crowpelt, a hint of warning in his voice.

"The apprentices don't need a free day, they need to keep training,"

he said, padding forward with his head high. "Maybe you don't care if your apprentices are weak, but I won't allow mine to be."

"Just let them have a free day," said Amberheart. "They deserve a day off after... yesterday."

Crowpelt looked at Cindertooth at the word "*yesterday*."

"Fine," said Cindertooth with a snort. "But I won't let Wasppaw have another free day like this."

--

"Kestrelpaw, I was doing the right thing," said Wasppaw as they padded through the forest. "We both benefited from that. I needed to practice fighting with unsheathed claws. I mean, everyone should be practicing with unsheathed claws, but I *really* needed to practice it because I'm going to be leader. As for Rainpaw, now he'll know what to do in a real fight *and* he'll be tougher."

"Okay," said Kestrelpaw with a smile. She decided to take Wasppaw's story because she was done with being angry and worried. She wanted to go back to playing.

"So did you have any more visions of our kits?" asked Wasppaw.

Over time Kestrelpaw had forgotten about that dream. "No. That was the only one."

"Oh well," he said. "Do you still remember if they were handsome? Liiiiiike me?"

Kestrelpaw playfully cuffed him on the ear with sheathed paws. "How do you know that their handsomeness didn't come from me?"

"'Cause I'm better looking."

"Are you sure?" asked Kestrelpaw. "Maybe we should ask Rainpaw who looks better when he wakes up."

"We don't need to," said Wasppaw. "We already know he'll pick me."

They both laughed as they trekked through the forest with no destination in mind.

"I hope they make us warriors soon," said Wasppaw. "The sooner I'm made a warrior, the sooner I become deputy."

Kestrelpaw flicked an ear. "Do you already have your future deputy in mind?"

"Yeah," said Wasppaw. "I think I'll pick a MarshClan cat. I especially like that brown tom who called us foxhearts. He seems really nice."

Kestrelpaw laughed. "Yes, you should pick him. He would make a great-"

The ground disappeared beneath her paws and she was sent tumbling into nothingness. She could hear her heart pounding as she fell through the black void. Finally, she landed on something squishy with a *thud*.

"Whoah. Are you okay?" asked Wasppaw from somewhere above her.

Kestrelpaw looked around. It was completely dark. All the scents were stale; nothing had been down here in a long time. It seemed like some kind of hole. "Yeah. This is cool. You should come down here."

Wasppaw climbed through the hole and came up beside Kestrelpaw. He grinned. "I bet we're the first cats to discover this place."

All the stale scents smelled of fox and rabbits, but no cat scent was in the mix. If there had been a cat down here, it must've been many many moons ago, probably before either of them were kitted.

"This can be our secret place," said Wasppaw. "A place just for us."

"Yeah!" said Kestrelpaw. "Let's go explore!"

They raced through the winding tunnel. It was long, clearly dug out by some big animal a long time ago. Whatever had originally made it had not been down here in moons. Nothing had been down these

tunnels in moons.

Mud squished beneath their paws. *Whenever it rains the tunnel must fill with water,* realized Kestrelpaw. Good thing it wasn't raining.

It was long before they finally reached the end of the tunnel. The air was murky with dust. Cracks ran along the walls. This place was ancient.

"This is cool," said Wasppaw, his voice echoing back to them. His whiskers were quivering. "We've made an amazing discovery!"

"I wonder how Beetlestar will react," said Kestrelpaw excitedly. "He'll flip out! We'll become famous!"

Wasppaw frowned. "Let's not share this with Beetlestar. Let's not share this with anyone."

"Why not?" asked Kestrelpaw.

"This should be our own special place," said Wasppaw. "No one else can come down here but us."

Kestrelpaw smiled. "You got it!"

By the time they climbed out of the tunnel the sun was setting.

"We better get back to camp," said Kestrelpaw. "Amberheart said to be back by sunset."

They raced back to camp, bursting with excitement.

"Don't tell anyone about the tunnel," he said at the entrance of camp. "It's our secret place."

"Don't worry," said Kestrelpaw with a chuckle, "my lips are sealed."

Kestrelpaw grabbed a finch from the fresh-kill pile and sat down next to Wasppaw.

"Here," she said. "Let's share."

"Thanks," said Wasppaw with a heartwarming grin. They both

started digging into the finch. As they ate, Wasppaw started yammering about how he'd become leader leader one day. Secretly, Kestrelpaw was tired and wished he'd shut up for once.

A familiar scent caught her nose. Rainpaw padded out of the medicine den and grabbed a skinny rabbit from the fresh-kill pile. He ate it in silence. Kestrelpaw couldn't stop looking at him, wishing that her heart wasn't fluttering the way it was.

A/N::

How was that? Any theories about Kestrelpaw and Rainpaw? What do you think will happen?

This chapter was pretty lighthearted, but things are about to start heating up.

//Edited

» Chapter Eight «

Kestrelpaw nervously waited right outside of camp, her heart hammering in her chest. She wished she could just hear the answer, what they have decided. *I have been a good apprentice, haven't I?* she thought.

Wasppaw, however, was being his normal annoying yet charming self. He didn't seem to be nervous at all.

"Stop worrying, mouse-brain," he said to her. "We're going to make it. We're special, remember? They have to make us warriors."

They had had their assessments yesterday. Hunting in the morning and fighting in the afternoon. Kestrelpaw felt like she had done excellent with the hunting; she even brought back more prey than Wasppaw! However, she hadn't done so well with the fighting.

Their mentors were currently speaking with Beetlestar, discussing their results on their assessments. Kestrelpaw felt pretty confident she had passed, but she still felt nervous. If she failed, everyone would make fun of her!

A moon ago Violetpaw and Hawkpaw were made warriors, Violetpaw becoming Violetheart and Hawkpaw becoming Hawkflight. Now she had to wait and see if she would join them in the warriors den.

"I wonder what my warrior name will be," said Wasppaw. "Probably something cool, like Waspclaw or Waspstrike. Although I guess it won't matter since I'll be Waspstar soon."

"How do you know *I* won't be leader?" asked Kestrelpaw. "Maybe Beetlestar likes me better."

"You wish," scoffed Wasppaw. Kestrelpaw wondered if he took that seriously; it was meant to be a joke.

"I wonder what my warrior name will be," said Rainpaw quietly. It was the first time he had spoken all day.

"Maybe Raincry, for your weak personality," said Wasppaw with a laugh. "Or better yet, Rainwimp." Rainpaw shrank down to the ground and backed away from Wasppaw. Kestrelpaw had a light smile, though she felt a little bad for Rainpaw.

At long last, Amberheart, Crowpelt, and Cindertooth padded out. "It's time to come back into camp!" said Amberheart with unusual energy. She looked at Kestrelpaw with shining golden eyes.

"Did I pass?" asked Kestrelpaw nervously.

"You're about to find out," said Amberheart, though by looking at her face, Kestrelpaw already knew the answer.

They all padded into camp as Beetlestar called a clan meeting. Briarwing sat next to him on Grand Rock with a grave look on her face. Beetlestar looked more jubilant and alive.

Their mentors led them to the back of the group of cats crowding around Grand Rock.

"As you all know we've had some... skirmishes with MarshClan, to say the least," said Beetlestar, starting the meeting. "I know many cats here want to strike back, but we must not answer their call. I believe that if we ignore them and not react to their hostility they will forget about it and leave us alone."

Cries of outrage rose among the cats. Kestrelpaw was so focused on her training that she hadn't realized how blood-thirsty her clanmates were.

She noticed Cindertooth was among the outraged cats and was yelling "Foxheart!" at the top of his lungs.

There were a few, however, who nodded respectfully at Beetlestar, showing that they agreed, Amberheart and Crowpelt being among them.

"On a different note," said Beetlestar. "I know there's been a bad

case of whitecough and greencough going around. Cherrynose is doing the best she can to contain it and treat all the sick cats."

Another thing Kestrelpaw hadn't been paying attention to. How had she not noticed these things before?

"All the sick cats are currently resting in the medicine den and will stay there until fully healed. We're doing our best to prevent anyone else from getting sick and making sure it doesn't turn into the dreaded blackcough."

Kestrelpaw looked in the audience for her mother. Her hopes fell when she couldn't find her. *Where is she? Doesn't she care about me?* Then Kestrelpaw wondered if she was sick and inside the medicine den, preventing her from coming out. A cold feeling spread over Kestrelpaw and she hoped her mother didn't have greencough.

She did see both of Wasppaw's parents, Brightwhisker and Thistleleap. Brightwhisker looked very happy and excited, but Thistleleap was scowling and kept looking at the borders as though wondering when he could leave.

Who's Rainpaw's parents? she wondered, realizing she didn't know who they were. She looked around. Nobody really looked like Rainpaw. *Leafswirl, maybe*? Leafswirl looked the most like Rainpaw, with her white fur and gray specks around her body. She looked old enough to be his mother.

"On a happier note," began Beetlestar, drawing Kestrelpaw's attention back to the meeting. "It's time for three apprentices to become warriors."

Kestrelpaw's heart fluttered. It was time. The moment she had been waiting for her entire life, ever since she had been kitted. What she had been training for.

"Kestrelpaw, please step forward."

Every cat moved over and created an alley leading Kestrelpaw to the Grand Rock. She padded through them, smiling and feeling proud. She continued to look around for Morningleaf but still

couldn't see her. *She must be sick, otherwise she would be here,* thought Kestrelpaw.

Beetlestar trained his green eyes on her and began. "I, Beetlestar, leader of CloudClan, call upon my warrior ancestors to look down on this apprentice. She has trained hard to understand the ways of your noble code, and I commend her to you as a warrior in her turn."

Kestrelpaw bounced excitedly, hoping it wasn't too noticeable.

"Kestrelpaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and to protect and defend your Clan, even at the cost of your life?"

Kestrelpaw smiled eagerly. "I do," she managed to say. She found it hard to talk; she was so proud and excited.

"Then by the powers of StarClan, I give you your warrior name. Kestrelpaw, from this moment you will be known as Kestrelfur. StarClan honors your spirit and we welcome you as a full warrior of CloudClan."

That was it. Kestrelfur was now an official warrior. She had been training for several moons, which had been worth it for this moment.

Beetlestar gracefully leaped down from the Grand Rock and rested his muzzle on Kestrelfur's forehead. Remembering tradition, she licked his shoulder.

Beetlestar stepped back and leaped back onto the Grand Rock, most likely preparing for the next ceremony. Kestrelfur cast a glance over at her mentor, Amberheart, who was smiling warmly.

Kestrelfur's heart fluttered. Now that Wasppaw and her were warriors, they could fulfill their destiny of being together. She remembered her dream of their kits from many moons ago. She couldn't wait to meet them. She couldn't wait for their lives to begin.

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//Edited

» Chapter Nine «

[image]

The only sound was the buzz of a mosquito. Kestrelfur waited silently outside the camp entrance. She looked up at the sky. The stars of Silverpelt were shining brightly above her, filling the night with light.

Waspfang stood next to her. He was tapping his paw anxiously as though he was bored. He gave Kestrelfur a look that said, *I really want to talk.* Unfortunately, it was a *silent* vigil, which meant no talking.

Kestrelfur felt anxious because she *really* wanted to talk. She had never been silent for so long before. It felt like torture.

Rainpaw—no, Rain*foot* now, stood on the other side of Kestrelfur and didn't seem to have a problem staying quiet. He was keeping to himself, looking down at his paws.

Kestrelfur was starting to get really impatient, fidgeting and pawing the ground. Staying quiet for this long wasn't easy.

She lost track of time but hours must have gone by. Hopefully. *Keep it together,* she thought. *You don't want to be the first cat who talks during her vigil.*

Finally, she decided that playing a joke might help her, so she cuffed Rainfoot on the head. He turned over to her and frowned as though saying "*seriously?"* His blue eyes glittered in the dark. Kestrelfur laughed silently, releasing some energy.

Another hour or so went by. No sign of the sun yet. *This must be the longest night ever,* thought Kestrelfur, feeling upset.

"I can't help it. These vigils are mouse-brained," said Waspfang. "I have to talk. I don't care if this is some sacred StarClan tradition."

Kestrelfur tried to reply, but she couldn't. She didn't want to ruin this; it was usually bad if you talked during your vigil. She didn't want to have any bad luck. So instead she batted Waspfang in the face with her tail, smirking as she did so.

"When I'm leader I'm going to get rid of these mouse-brained vigils," he said. "They're pointless and nobody likes them."

Kestrelfur agreed, but she couldn't help but wonder if StarClan had heard that. What did they think? Then again, they might not even exist.

At long last the sun began to rise and Amberheart came out to excuse them. Kestrelfur and Rainfoot started heading for the warriors den, which was a cozy burrow dug in the ground. Out of the corner of her eye, she saw Waspfang turn away and start heading towards Briarwing, who was assigning patrols.

"We're allowed to sleep," said Kestrelfur with a smirk, assuming he didn't realize that.

"I know," he said sternly. "But I'm not going to sleep. I want to start my warrior duties today."

"But you don't have to," said Kestrelfur with a frown.

Waspfang growled. "I'm the future leader. I have to train harder and make a good impression so I'll be picked as the next deputy."

Kestrelfur couldn't think of a reply to that so she turned away and went back to the warriors den. Inside there were several nests made out of comfortable moss. It was really dark and cozy with only a small beam of sunlight pouring out through the entrance. There were still a few cats who were sleeping in, but most of it was empty.

There were three nests in the corner, set aside from all the others. Rainfoot started heading for one. At first Kestrelfur couldn't think, then she realized those nests were for the three of them.

Kestrelfur sat down in the nest next to Rainfoot's. Rainfoot was already curling into a sleeping position. She didn't like how her

heart swelled when she looked at him, how she could see herself touching muzzles with him. She thought back at when her and Waspfang had touched muzzles under the moonlight, back when they were apprentices. She imagined it with Rainfoot instead, and she shuddered. She was meant to be with Waspfang, not him.

Rainfoot was staring straight ahead. At first Kestrelfur assumed he was in a daze, then she noticed he was staring at one of the warriors. Violetheart. She had gray and white fur and bright green eyes, which were closed right now with sleep. She was so much better than Rainfoot, which made it funny that he was into her.

Kestrelfur layed down and closed her eyes, sleep drawing her in quickly. Within seconds she was in a deep slumber.

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Kestrelfur woke up to a shriek. There was no one left in the warrior's den but her and Rainfoot, who was sitting up with wide eyes.

"What is it?" asked Kestrelfur.

"I don't know!" said Rainfoot, his mew filled with fear. They both scrambled out of the den to see the clearing filled with cats fighting.

Rainfoot ran off. Kestrelfur wanted to follow him, but she didn't have the opportunity to when she was knocked over by a huge weight. She turned around to see a huge white tom snarling in her face with vicious brown eyes. He had MarshClan scent on him.

Remembering her training, Kestrelfur sprang up and threw the tom off of her. She quickly moved forward and clawed his face; she didn't remember unsheathing her claws.

Blood dripped from his face, covering his left eye. With a screech he sprang forward and knocked Kestrelfur over, pinning her down this time. She tried to knock him off but he held on with an iron grip. Suddenly his head came down like a snake and bit down into her shoulder.

The pain was unlike anything she had ever felt before. It exploded in her shoulder and seemed to travel through her whole body. She bit back a scream and swiped a claw over his ear, putting a good notch in it.

The tom striked back and drove his claws down her underbelly. This time Kestrelfur screamed. She felt like she could hear her heart pounding in her ears. Adrenaline was shooting through her as she gathered all her might and kicked up with her hind legs, launching the tom into the air. He got to his paws immediately, spitting at her.

Kestrelfur smirked at him. "Foxheart," she said, sticking her tongue out. Then she sprang forward and drove her claws into his shoulder. The tom winced in pain and batted her away with a paw.

Then another cat hurtled through the air and knocked the white tom over, pinning him on the ground. Blood spat from the new tom's mouth as he raised his claws and drove it through the white tom's throat so fast the white tom didn't have time to scream.

Blood gurgled out of the white tom's throat and he hacked as though trying to say something. Then his body convulsed.

The tom on top of him was covered in blood. Red liquid was pouring out of his mouth as his sides heaved. Yet despite the condition he was in, he was glaring down at the white tom with a ferocious amber glare that could melt a leaf off of a stem.

It was Waspfang.

A/N::

Hey guys! Thanks for reading this far! If you're enjoying the story, don't forget to leave a vote, it would be much appreciated!

What do you think about Waspfang? Any predictions about what will happen next?

Photo above from cgtrader.com; I have edited it

//Edited

» Chapter Ten «

[image]

Kestrelfur blinked in surprise after seeing that unfurl in front of her. It happened so fast she didn't have time to think.

Waspfang swiped his claws across the tom's underbelly. The white tom didn't move or give any indication of pain. His brown eyes were glazed over with a white tint and he stared blankly at nothing. His mouth was gaped open as though he were trying to scream.

Then Waspfang started dragging the body away towards the bushes just outside of camp. Kestrelfur, confused, horrified, and curious, started to follow.

MarshClan scent had filled the camp. Screeches filled the air. MarshClan was raiding them! *How many cats are here*? she wondered. She couldn't stick around to figure it out. She had to follow Waspfang.

He dragged the white coated body behind a bush just east of the dirtplace. The stench of decay hit her nose so strong she thought she'd lose whatever was left of her dinner from last night. The sound of her gagging alerted Waspfang and he turned around. He smiled when he saw her.

"What are you doing?" she asked, not hiding the disgust from her voice.

Waspfang flicked an ear. "Just taking out the MarshClan cats."

Kestrelfur leaned forward to try and see what was behind the bush; Waspfang leaned sideways and straightened up ever so slightly. Was it just her, or was he trying to block her view?

"But why are you killing them?" she asked. "I'm pretty sure that's against the warrior code."

"We're wasting time," he snapped. "Our clan is in trouble. We've got to go!"

Kestrelfur decided he was right and she should question him later, so together they bolted back into camp.

Immediately she was pinned down by a MarshClan cat. Before she had time to process what had happened the cat leaned down and bit into the shoulder that had been injured from fighting the white tom. Kestrelfur winced in pain and tried to shove her attacker off, but her attempt was fruitless.

She managed to make out that her attacker was a gray she-cat. Her left eye was closed and crossed by a scar, probably lost in a past battle.

The she-cat wasn't going to let go, so Kestrelfur decided now was the time to do something clever. "Do all MarshClan cats have disgusting breath, or is it just you? Because it really smells like a fox's butt."

The she-cat leaned in closer and dug her claws into Kestrelfur's fur. Her good-eye narrowed like a shard of ice. "You sure you don't got fleas? 'Cause your pelt is shaggy and unkempt."

"That doesn't even make sense," said Kestrelfur with a smile. Using the distraction, she kicked up with her hind legs and tossed the she-cat off of her. The gray cat got to her paws quickly and spat in her direction.

"MarshClan, retreat!" a raspy voice shouted. "Retreat!"

Just like that the camp went silent and the MarshClan cats started getting up and running towards the camp exit.

"This isn't over," spat the gray she-cat. "We will make sure we have our justice, you filthy mange-pelts!"

Kestrelfur flicked an ear. "Same here."

The gray she-cat's fur fluffed out and she dug her claws into the earth. "How dare you! Stormstar will make sure we have our

revenge!"

She started racing towards the camp exit with the rest of her clanmates. Halfway there she stopped and faced Kestrelfur. "I want you to remember my name. My name is Shadowbite. Don't you forget it." Then she raced through the camp exit.

The MarshClan cats stunk of blood; not a single one of them was uninjured. Shadowbite was probably in the best condition, and she had a huge gash on her side and a small cut next to her good eye.

The camp was chaos; every cat was running around not sure what to do. Cherrynose was in a corner and mumbling to herself what herbs she might need and how many injuries she'll have to treat. The kits from the nursery were screaming and having a hissy-fit. Several warriors were missing.

Then thunder boomed above them and the clearing filled with light for a split second. Then the rain started.

"StarClan is upset," someone cried out in a very distressed voice.

Beetletstar magically appeared on top of Grand Rock. "Cats of CloudClan," he called out in a deep and loud voice. When nobody looked over, he tried again. "Cats of CloudClan!"

The clearing froze and everyone turned their attention to him. One of his ears was torn open and gushing blood down his face; he had a visible gash down his side; his paws were coated in blood. "We have just been attacked by MarshClan," he announced, though that was already obvious to most. "But we must not panick. We have to stay strong; they may try attacking again."

His bright green gaze settled over the clearing. "I'd like for my senior warriors to go around the territory and make sure that MarshClan has made it back to their territory. If you find any of them lingering within the borders, don't attack them, come straight back to camp and report it to me immediately."

There were a few upset grumbles at that.

"Everyone else should go and have their injuries checked out by Cherrynose. Once you have been checked out stay within the camp. I will assign a final border patrol and a hunting patrol."

Thunder boomed overhead and the rain poured down harder, making Kestrelfur feel cold.

Beetlestar dismissed the meeting with a flick of his tail and cats started to depart. The senior warriors gathered together and planned out their patrol, while the younger warriors and apprentices crowded around the medicine den. Kestrelfur craned her neck to find Waspfang, but she couldn't see him. It took a few minutes before she concluded that he wasn't in the camp.

Rainfoot padded up beside her. "Are you okay?"

Kestrelfur looked over at him. "Are *you* okay?" He was visibly wincing as blood dripped down his sides. He was covered in scratches all over, hardly any spot left unmarked. Kestrelfur could see the large MarshClan cats easily overpowering the scrawny warrior.

Rainfoot blinked. "I guess everyone's a bit shaken up. But you had this lost look in your eyes."

"I was looking for Waspfang," said Kestrelfur. "I don't think he's in camp."

Rainfoot frowned. "It's funny that I'm not surprised. As an apprentice he never followed orders, and I can't see that changing now that he's a warrior."

Kestrelfur grinned at him, surprised that he brightened her day.

Then a startled looking Crowpelt launched himself into camp, his sides heaving heavily. Everyone turned to him; a strange silence filled the air.

"Briarwing... Briarwing's dead!"

A/N::

Ooh this chapter was intense, and it left us with lots of questions! Where's Waspfang? What does Crowpelt mean by, "Briarwing's dead!"? Leave what you think will happen next in the comments!

Photo from messybeast.com; I have edited it

//Edited

» Chapter Eleven «

[image]

Kestrelfur's heart picked up speed. The deputy couldn't have died! Was it true? It couldn't be right, CloudClan won the battle so they shouldn't have had any deaths.

Someone shot over to Crowpelt. "It's not true!" she cried. "It can't be true!"

It was the elder, Speckleface. She had smooth white fur with brown specks. Her eyes were full of sadness and grief. She was Briarwing's mother.

Crowpelt nodded sadly as though not sure what to say.

"I don't believe it!" Speckleface cried. "I won't believe it until I see her body with my own eyes."

Crowpelt flicked his tail. "Come if you want, but I'm warning you it might not make you feel better."

The clan slowly started crowding around the two cats. Murmurs went through the silent camp. The rain poured down harder.

Beetlestar moved to the front of the crowd and stood in front of Crowpelt and the elder. "Is it true? Did Briarwing really..." he trailed off as though he couldn't say it. His leafy green eyes squeezed shut.

"Follow me," Crowpelt said quietly, but loud enough for Kestrelfur to hear. The clan followed him through the entrance of camp, past the bushes, and into the forest. Then he stopped in front of a bush and flicked his ear toward it. "She's right behind it."

It seemed like every cat held their breath as they tried to squeeze through to see her. Several gasps could be heard as they layed eyes on her.

Rainfoot creeped ahead and Kestrelfur saw him shake his head. "No..." she could hear him say quietly.

"No!" shrieked the elder Speckleface. "No! My kit! My precious kit!" Crowpelt moved toward her and tried to calm her down, but she swiped him away with a claw. "Don't come near me! Don't come near me! I need to be with my kit!"

Thunder roared overhead and the wind blew violently as though StarClan themselves were grieving for the dead deputy.

Kestrelfur squeezed past some cats and finally managed to see Briarwing. *No...*

She was lying down in the grass, her amber eyes closed like she was asleep, in a puddle of blood. Her neck was twisted completely backwards with several claw marks cutting deep through her skin. Her pelt was coated in dried blood. Kestrelfur wasn't aware MarshClan could be so cruel.

She felt numb as she walked away from the body with the rest of the clan. Only Speckleface and Beetlestar lingered, hunched over her body.

Cold seeped through Kestrelfur's bones, both from the chilly rain and from the horrors of the battle. What MarshClan cat was cruel enough to claw someone's neck like that? Then she thought of Waspfang, who had done the same thing to the white tom. She hadn't even known his name. Was he the deputy? Was MarshClan mourning the same way as them? She highly doubted it; after seeing the battle today MarshClan seemed too cruel to be able to mourn. Their hearts were dark like the swamps. They could feel no sympathy.

Kestrelfur suddenly longed to see her mother, Morningleaf. Where was she? She wasn't at the battle. Kestrelfur started towards the medicine den and had to shove her way past several injured warriors and apprentices.

Inside the scent of herbs was strong, making her wrinkle her nose. There were several moss nests in the corner, most empty but

some had sick cats on them. The sick cats with whitecough and greencough.

Sure enough, like she had suspected, Morningleaf was lying in one, shivering and sneezing.

Kestrelfur felt bad to see her mother in such a horrible condition. *Maybe playing a prank will make her feel better,* she thought. She slowly smiled and crouched low to the ground and started creeping towards her mother's nest. She was asleep, not noticing that someone was creeping up on her. When close enough, Kestrelfur rubbed her tail over her mother's face. Morningleaf sat up with a start and Kestrelfur let out a *mrrow* of laughter.

"Oh, you've grown so much," Morningleaf said, pride filling her gaze. "I'm so glad you're safe."

"Where have you been?" asked Kestrelfur, trying to avoid a sappy moment.

"I haven't been able to see you much since you have become an apprentice," she said. "I really wanted to see your warrior ceremony, but Cherrynose ordered me to stay here and rest." She gave a tired cough.

"Well, you could've sneaked away."

Morningleaf rolled her eyes. "You have not changed at all since you were a kit." She frowned fearfully. "Are you in pain. Did the battle scare you?"

"Of course not," said Kestrelfur, puffing out her chest. Though inside she felt weak and tired. More than anything she wanted to curl up next to her mother. *Don't be mouse-brained,* she thought. *I'm a warrior now and I need to be brave and strong*.

"Well, please let Cherrynose examine your injuries," said Morningleaf fearfully. "I don't want you to get an infection or bleed to death. Your father was just like you and he died in a battle long ago." She wheezed.

"Mom, I'm fine," said Kestrelfur. "Please stop worrying."

Morningleaf sighed. "I know. It's just... I can't lose you too." Her eyes filled with grief and pain. She coughed. "Darkpatch was an amazing warrior. Clever and funny. But in battle that's what got him killed. Please be careful. Don't talk to any cat from a different clan."

Kestrelfur was startled by this, so she nodded quietly.

"Hey!" exclaimed Cherrynose, running inside. "What are you doing? This is for sick cats only. If you want your injuries treated, go outside!"

Kestrelfur nodded and padded out of the medicine den, ignoring Cherrynose whose fur was fluffed up.

Why was the clan so full of grief? So Briarwing died, but that's no big deal. Life would move on. The world wasn't over. Why couldn't everyone just be happy and play?

After getting treated by Cherrynose, she grabbed a skinny mouse from the pityful fresh-kill pile and sat down next to Rainfoot, who was lost in silence.

The quiet clan and the pouring rain was driving Kestrelfur nuts. She had to do something. She looked over at the squirrel Rainfoot had and swiped it away from him just as he leaned down to take a bite.

"Hey!" he said, looking at her sternly. "Give it back!"

Kestrelfur grinned and kept it under her paws. Rainfoot tried to swipe it back with a paw, but Kestrelfur quickly moved away. Whenever he moved forward Kestrelfur would move away. Rainfoot whined in frustration.

Then a familiar scent caught her nose and sparks tingled under her fur. They both looked up to see Waspfang padding toward them with a crazy grin on his face.

"So," he said. "What did I miss?"

A/N::

This was a pretty depressing chapter... until the end. Oh, Waspfang, Waspfang, Waspfang. XD Anyway, as usual, I'd like to know if you have any predictions in the comments! If you have any tips or find any grammar/spelling mistakes, feel free to let me know!

Photo above from pinterest.com; I have edited it

//Edited

» Chapter Twelve «

"Where exactly have you been all day?" asked Kestrelfur, slightly curling her lip. Using the distraction, Rainfoot quickly swiped the squirrel away from under her paws. "It's mine," he said stubbornly.

Waspfang was grinning like crazy. "I was just making sure that the MarshClan cats went back to their territory." There was something off with the look in his eyes, like dishonesty.

"Well, you should have been here," said Kestrelfur. "You shouldn't have gone off."

Waspfang tilted his head. "So I heard the deputy died."

"Yeah. The whole clan is mourning now," said Kestrelfur.

Waspfang grinned and had a strange maniac-look in his eyes. "When I'm leader the clan won't mourn like this. We'd be attacking MarshClan right back."

Rainfoot crouched down low and quickly chewed on his squirrel, avoiding Waspfang's gaze.

"I can't wait for Beetlestar to choose the new deputy," Waspfang went on. "And I know you'll be right there cheering me on when he announces my name."

Kestrelfur frowned. "What makes you think *you'll* be deputy? Two days ago you were an apprentice! Plus, the warrior code says you must have been a mentor to be deputy, and you haven't been one."

Waspfang smiled coldly. "We'll see."

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The next morning the clan was no better than how it was the day before. Nobody knew what to do without a deputy appointing

patrols.

Out of the chaos of fighting over patrols, Beetlestar magically appeared on Grand Rock and called for a clan meeting. He looked tired and weary but still seemed to be in a bright mood.

"As you all know Briarwing courageously died in battle yesterday," he began. A hush settled over the clan. "And she will always be honored in our memory and will be welcomed as a brave cat in StarClan. But this does happen and we must move on and appoint a new deputy."

"It should be Duskleap," an apprentice, Sparrowpaw, called out. Several cats murmured an agreement, and Duskleap hunched down as though embarrassed.

"Yes," said Amberheart warmly. "He's kind, helpful, brave, and he was an excellent mentor to Morningleaf."

Kestrelfur blinked in surprise. *Duskleap mentored my mother?* Her mother never mentioned who her mentor was during training, and Kestrelfur never really thought about it.

Beetlestar nodded. "Well then. I'd like to appoint—"

"Wait!" Cherrynose called out, interrupting Beetlestar. She started shoving her way through the crowd and slowly made her way up to Beetlestar. She had something in her mouth, though Kestrelfur couldn't make out what it was.

"What is it, Cherrynose?" asked Beetlestar curiously.

Cherrynose scrambled up Grand Rock and stood next to Beetlestar, dropping whatever she had in her mouth by his paws. The two started talking amongst themselves, too quietly for anyone else to hear.

"StarClan has sent an omen," Beetlestar finally announced to the clan. "And it could be related to the new deputy."

Whispering and shouts broke out. "Duskleap should be the deputy," someone screamed passionately. "He *is* the new deputy!"

Clearly Duskleap was very popular.

Beetlestar raised his tail for silence, and it took several seconds before it finally came. "We can't just ignore the sign StarClan has sent us. We must at least try to understand what it means." He looked over at Cherrynose. "Please explain."

Cherrynose looked surprised for a second, but quickly recovered. "This morning I walked out of my den and I stepped on something that felt very... odd. I looked to see what it was, of course. I discovered that it was a cat-fang with a dead wasp pinned on it somehow. The wasp, strangely enough, won't come off. There is no explanation for it, so I think it must be from StarClan."

Several cats looked over at Waspfang, realizing the omen was for him. Waspfang puffed his chest out and had his shoulders back proudly, though his face was emotionless. He was clearly trying to hide his pride and excitement.

"How do you know it's about the deputy and not something else? Or just plainly a coincidence?" shouted a cat. Kestrelfur realized she knew that voice and quickly recognized Cindertooth.

"Oh!" said Cherrynose. "There's a detail I left out. In my head, as I was walking out, my mind was wrapped around the deputy. I was wondering who StarClan really wanted and I just had the thought that they might send an omen when I stepped on the fang. If that's a coincidence, it's a really big one."

The clan went silent. No one knew what to say to that.

"Very well," announced Beetlestar. "I will wait and see if StarClan will send any more signs by moonhigh tonight. If they don't, I will go ahead and appoint Duskleap deputy."

The clan sunk this in. *Would StarClan really be able to send another omen before then*? wondered Kestrelfur. She really hoped Waspfang would become deputy. It was his dream and his destiny, as well as hers. Once he was leader, she would be his deputy.

Hopefully StarClan would come through and send another

omen—another sign. Hopefully this time tomorrow Waspfang would be the deputy.

A/N::

This chapter was pretty short, only 847 words (not including this). Anyway, do you think Waspfang will become deputy? If so, what do you think will happen once he becomes deputy?

Also, I just wanted to say, thanks for reading!

//Edited

» Chapter Thirteen «

It wasn't long before moonhigh when Beetlestar's voice echoed around the camp, calling a clan meeting.

The warriors' den went noisy as warriors rustled around and climbed out of their nests. Kestrelfur's heart was thumping with excitement as she climbed out of her moss nest.

"Who do you think will be deputy?" asked a she-cat next to her. She had sleek gray fur with bright green eyes. "I think it'll be Duskleap. I mean, why would StarClan choose someone who *just* became a warrior, like, two days ago?"

"Oh, it'll be Waspfang," said Kestrelfur with a smirk.

The she-cat flicked an ear. "And just what makes you think that?"

"Because he's special," said Kestrelfur. "He's much better than you or any other cat in this clan. He could easily take you down in a fight." She stuck her tongue out.

"Ugh, I hate new warriors," said the she-cat, padding away.

Kestrelfur climbed out of the warriors' den and joined the crowding cats. Beetlestar and Cherrynose were sitting down on the Grand Rock. It was impossible to read their expressions.

Rainfoot padded up next to Kestrelfur. "What are the chances of Waspfang becoming deputy?" he asked her in a low voice.

"He'll probably be deputy," said Kestrelfur. She had little doubt in her mind that he wouldn't be chosen.

"It is time to appoint a new deputy," announced Beetlestar. "I hope that Briarwing's succesor will set a good example to the clan."

The statement sounded odd, but Kestrelfur didn't think much of it.

"Cherrynose has spotted another omen," said Beetlestar. "This one is a wasp being impaled by a fang. We've had two similar omens. Me and Cherrynose think it's clear what StarClan is trying to say."

Noise erupted through the clan. "He was just made a warrior!" shouted Cindertooth. "He can't be made deputy so soon! He hasn't even been a mentor!"

"And his father is from BrookClan!" someone added.

Beetlestar straightened up. "I know. But StarClan believes he should be deputy, so I believe he should be deputy too."

"But Duskleap should be deputy!" someone shouted.

"StarClan clearly wants Waspfang to be deputy," said Beetlestar calmly. "So he'll be deputy."

"But he hasn't been a mentor yet!" the clan kept shouting. "He's half-clan! Beetlestar, have you gone mouse-brained?"

"This is no longer up for debate," said Beetlestar. "Me and Cherrynose believe Waspfang should be deputy."

The shouting started quieting down. "Thank you. Waspfang, please step up."

The crowd parted and gave Waspfang a pathway to Grand Rock. Waspfang's face was emotionless as he walked through the crowd. His muscles bulged with every step; his chest was puffed out.

He stood in front of Beetlestar and looked up at him with pride in his eyes.

Beetlestar spoke, "I say these words before StarClan, so that the spirits of our warrior ancestors may hear and approve of my choice. The new deputy of CloudClan is Waspfang. I hope his bravery and strength will do some good for the clan."

Kestrelfur started chanting his name, with a few others joining in, however, most of the camp remained silent.

"Thank you," said Waspfang, his voice loud and commanding. He turned to face the crowd. "I will work hard to make CloudClan stronger and boost apprentice training. I will make sure that *everyone* in the clan is working hard to improve their skill all the time. CloudClan will be stronger."

Some cats gave nods of approval. "Tomorrow," said Waspfang, "I will make sure that every warrior is put on a patrol. I will make sure that every apprentice is training. I will make sure that MarshClan, or any clan, won't attack us again."

Some cats nodded an agreement. Then the crowd started to part and everyone started going back to their den.

Kestrelfur wanted to go and congratulate Waspfang, but Beetlestar was talking to him. Oh, well, he didn't need to be congratulated anyway.

"I hope StarClan knows what they're doing," said Rainfoot as they padded back to the warrior's den.

"Why do you say that?" asked Kestrelfur.

Rainfoot shrugged. "Well, Waspfang is just a little... self-centered. He cares only about himself."

"And why is that a problem?" said Kestrelfur as she nudged him.

Rainfoot shook his head. "Never mind. Forget I said anything."

He quickly padded away as though uncomfortable. Kestrelfur smiled. "Wimp!" she called out.

Kestrelfur layed down in her nest and closed her eyes. However, she couldn't fall asleep. She couldn't stop thinking about what Rainfoot said. *Waspfang is a little self-centered,* she thought. *And arrogant. But what's the problem with that? Nobody's perfect, not even someone with a destiny....*

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The grass waved as a soft wind blew. Leaves spiraled through the

air.

There were no trees, no scent of cats, no rocks or stones. Just grass, wind, and leaves. Stars hung in the sky, shining brightly like a thousand suns.

Kestrelfur tasted the air and felt like stars were collecting on her tongue. The air tasted cold, but calm. Peaceful, even.

Kestrelfur took a few steps through the grass. It wasn't rough under her paws, but soft like moss.

Another soft wind blew, ruffling her fur. She was confused, wondering how she got here.

Pawsteps. There was someone behind her. She turned around and saw Briarwing. Her brown pelt was sparkling like stars and her eyes glittered softly like a creek.

"Briarwing...," said Kestrelfur, her voice slurring. "I thought you were dead."

Briarwing flicked her tail. "Beware."

"What?" asked Kestrelfur, barely able to speak the words. She felt fatigued, like it took all her might to open her eyes again after every blink.

Briarwing narrowed her eyes. "Beware the one who doesn't belong where he is."

"What...does that mean?" asked Kestrelfur, swaying. There was a twist in her gut as she realized something was wrong. "Where am I?"

Briarwing turned her head away. "Sometimes the right choice isn't easy."

"Why..." muttered Kestrelfur. Suddenly her legs couldn't hold her, and she was lying in the soft grass, curling up like she was in a nest. Briarwing disappeared, vanishing from sight.

The world went dark as she heard Briarwing's voice echo one last warning.

"Beware..."

A/N::

Yep, Waspfang's deputy now. Do you think this will be good or bad? What do you think Briarwing's warning means? As usual, leave predictions in the comments!

//Edited

» Chapter Fourteen «

[image]

Kestrelfur opened her eyes to sunlight pouring through the den entrance. She was curled up with her tail over her paws like she used to do when she was a kit. She blinked droplets off her eyelashes as she stood up and stretched.

Warriors were already shuffling out of their nests, heading out the den entrance. The sounds of patrols being assigned could be heard from outside. She looked over to Waspfang's nest, but it was empty. Of coure it was; he was busy assigning patrols.

To her other side was Rainfoot, who was still fast asleep. His eyes were shut tight and his tail was wrapped around his body protectively. Next to his moss a fire-ant crawled, heading in the opposite direction. Kestrelfur smiled. One prank couldn't hurt.

She quickly grabbed the fire-ant in her mouth and laid it in his nest. She wasn't sure how quickly it would take him to notice, but it would be fun to see him complaining about it.

She padded out of the den and joined the other warriors who were gathering around the Grand Rock where Waspfang stood assigning patrols. Kestrelfur bounced as she realized this was her first real day as a warrior. The first day they were attacked by MarshClan so the camp was a mess, and the second day was just her hunting on her own and catching anything she could to restock the fresh-kill pile, which was boring. Now, hopefully, she could go on a border patrol. It would be her first one as a warrior.

As an apprentice patrols were the most fun thing to do, other than playing with the other apprentices. Unfortunately, as an apprentice you don't get to go on many patrols; she had only been on three before.

Waspfang was surprisingly quick at gathering patrols, especially for it being his first day. He had the dawn patrol together in no

time, and they were already exiting camp as he was assigning another patrol.

"Kestrelfur!" he said excitedly. His voice was filled with pride. "I'd like you to go on the MarshClan patrol."

"I thought the dawn patrol just left," said Kestrelfur, puzzled. *A MarshClan patrol?*

Waspfang shook his head. "This is a different patrol. This one is just the MarshClan border. I want it double checked every day from now on until we're sure there's not another attack."

Waspfang called for Duskleap and Beechwhisker to join her on the patrol. Waspfang started organizing a hunting patrol as the three cats gathered together.

"Waspfang's technique is interesting," said Duskleap. "I would have never thought of having two patrols checking the MarshClan border. I think he's a better deputy than what I could have been."

Beechwhisker waved her tail. "Don't say that. You would've been an excellent deputy."

Duskleap shrugged. Out of the corner of her eye Kestrelfur saw Rainfoot crawl out of the warrior's den with a frightened look in his eyes. Kestrelfur was smiling at him smugly, but he didn't seem to notice as he kept looking straight ahead and slowly padded toward Waspfang, who quickly assigned him on training duty.

Training duty was unique to CloudClan cats. Since they specialized in climbing trees, they had to practice that a lot—even after becoming a warrior to make sure they could still do it. It was almost like a free day. Just practicing tree climbing or fighting or whatever your weak spot was.

"Alright!" Waspfang announced to the clan. "Go work hard to make this clan better. I will be working with the apprentices to make sure they're training hard."

This surprised Kestrelfur. Deputies usually didn't spend time with the apprentices—at least Briarwing never had. Kestrelfur liked

that he was; it seemed to make him a better deputy.

The patrols set off, each heading in different directions after exiting the camp. Duskleap immediately took charge, maybe because he felt like he should since he was good enough to be deputy, or maybe simply because he was a senior warrior.

They trekked through the forest, passing the apprentices who seemed to be training really hard and Rainfoot, who was sitting in a tree and didn't seem to be paying attention to them.

Kestrelfur examined Beechwhisker, who was a sleek brown she-cat with hazel eyes. *We must look so much alike,* she thought. *Almost like we could be sisters.* Kestrelfur visibly shrugged. They might not be sisters, but they could still be kin. Most cats in the clan were related to one another.

Duskleap was a white tom with ginger and black spots over his pelt. He clearly looked older with wisdom in his eyes. There was an old battle scar on his shoulder.

"Were you my mother's mentor?" Kestrelfur asked curiously. "What was it like?"

Duskleap chuckled. "She was an interesting apprentice. Very jumpy and always nervous to try new skills. Battle training always freaked her out; she was a hunter from the start."

This didn't surprise Kestrelfur. Morningleaf was so frightened after Darkpatch's death that she stayed in that hollow outside of camp and wouldn't come out. She had even forced Kestrelfur to stay in there with her for six moons until she was apprenticed.

As if reading her thoughts, Duskleap said, "I wish I could've prepared her better. She was made a warrior too early and didn't have time to mature and figure things out. What didn't help was Darkpatch died only days after she discovered she was pregnant. That was probably the most tragic thing to ever happen to her and she went into shock."

"You did your best," said Beechwhisker gently. "I don't think

anyone could've trained her better. Morningleaf was just very apprehensive."

A heavy silence filled the air, making Kestrelfur's heart feel heavy. When the stink of MarshClan hit her nostrils, she was taken back and gagged.

They came up to the cliff that marked the border with MarshClan. The scent of the dawn patrol hung in the air. There was no sign of MarshClan cats.

"Looks good," said Duskleap with an approving nod. "But it doesn't seem like the dawn patrol re-marked the scent markers, so we should go ahead and do that."

Kestrelfur had only sprayed scent markers once before, so she didn't feel very confident, and she didn't want to embarrass herself in front of these older warriors. So she pretended to act confident with it and sprayed down the markers, making sure not go over the border.

"Everything seems good," said Duskleap. "I guess we can head back to camp."

They started heading back to camp, relieving Kestrelfur to get away from the yucky stench.

Halfway there Duskleap stopped and rotated his ears. "Did you hear that?"

Kestrelfur listened but couldn't hear anything.

"It sounds like a fight," said Beechwhisker with a frown. "It sounds like it's coming from the BrookClan border."

Kestrelfur listened, swiveling her ears. "I don't hear anything."

"I think there's a fight," Beechwhisker continued nervously, ignoring Kestrelfur.

"We need to help," said Duskleap.

They started running towards the BrookClan border. As they got closer Kestrelfur could hear it: shrieks and battle cries.

The noises got louder as they neared the border. There was clearly a skirmish.

They made it all the way to the border when they finally saw it: a gray tom on the ground streaked in blood. His amber eyes were full of flames.

"What's going on?" asked Duskleap. The dawn patrol turned around: Cindertooth, Amberheart, and several other warriors Kestrelfur didn't recognize by name.

"He started it," snarled Cindertooth, shoving his way forward. "He wouldn't let us do our jobs."

Amberheart looked ashamed. "We were just trying to do what Waspfang told us to."

Duskleap tilted his head. "What was that?"

Amberheart looked down at her paws as though she didn't want to speak.

"We're kicking him out," growled Cindertooth. "Waspfang wants his father off the territory."

A/N: :

Ooh what will happen 0-0

Also that photo above is an extra book cover I made that I didn't use as the official cover because it feels too simple to me. I know some people like simple covers, usually I do too, but personally I'd like the cover to have a little more to it so that it stands out.

So, any predictions?

//Edited

» Chapter Fifteen «

Thistleleap, Waspfang's father, got to his paws and had a snarl planted on his face. "Who was mouse-brained enough to let Waspfang become deputy? He's too young!"

"Don't question our leader!" growled Cindertooth, giving him a hard stare.

Kestrelfur remembered what Waspfang had said about his father. He fell in love with Brightwhisker, a CloudClan she-cat. Thistleleap was a BrookClan tom. Their love was forbidden, but they kept meeting anyway and suddenly they had a kit. After finding out, BrookClan was angry and kicked him out of their territory. Beetlestar, being forgiving, allowed Thistleleap to stay on their territory and to hunt as long as he didn't enter camp without an escort. Now Thistleleap stayed by the BrookClan border and had made a den for himself and has been content ever since. Waspfang hated his BrookClan father for being from a different clan, betraying that clan, and living as a rogue now.

Kestrelfur had only seen him twice, once at their apprentice ceremony and once at their warrior ceremony. Neither times he looked too friendly.

Duskleap stepped forward, looking completely calm. "Has Beetlestar agreed to this?"

"We don't know," said a black she-cat. "Waspfang just told us to get him off the territory when we passed by the BrookClan border."

Duskleap and Beechwhisker exchanged a glance. "Maybe we should get this clarified with him," said Duskleap. "It just doesn't seem like something he would agree to."

"Just get out of here and leave me alone!" spat Thistleleap. His amber eyes were like pits of fire.

"We can't just leave him here," growled Cindertooth, thrusting himself toward him. Thistleleap raised his hackles in return, and the two glared at eachother.

"He hasn't done anything wrong in several moons," said Duskleap. "I can't see Beetlestar wanting to kick him out so suddenly."

A few warriors nodded. Cindertooth unsheathed his claws and dug them into the earth before walking away from Thistleleap.

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"What?" said Beetlestar, looking confused. "I never said anything about kicking Thistleleap off the territory."

"But Waspfang told us to," said Amberheart quietly. The other warriors in the dawn patrol exchanged a glance.

"Even if you never said anything about it," said Cindertooth, "Waspfang had a good idea. We *should* kick him off the territory. He's stealing our prey!"

Beetlestar calmly flicked his tail. "It hasn't been a problem in the past. Thistleleap has not been causing any trouble so we should respect him. He stays on the territory, no matter what Waspfang tells you."

"Will Waspfang be punished?" asked a golden tom.

"Waspfang is still new," said Beetlestar gently. "I believe he'll be a good deputy, so I won't punish him."

There were a few upset grumbles as the group broke up. Kestrelfur was glad that the discussion was finally done. She was starving.

She went to the fresh-kill pile and grabbed a mouse; she sat down next to Rainfoot.

Rainfoot was staring at Violetheart, who was eating a crow at the other side of the clearing.

"Ooh! Lovebird!" said Kestrelfur jokingly.

Rainfoot looked over at her with panick in his eyes. "Not so loud! I don't want her to hear you."

Kestrelfur rolled her eyes. "She's not even looking at you. You'd be lucky if she even knows you exist."

Rainfoot shifted his gaze down to his vole and ate it silently. *Was that too harsh?* wondered Kestrelfur. She felt a little bad, but she shrugged it off, deciding it wasn't a big deal.

Waspfang entered the camp along with the three new apprentices, Sparrowpaw, Nightpaw, and Chervilpaw. They were apprenticed about a moon ago, just before Waspfang, Kestrelfur, and Rainfoot became warriors. They looked tired, with messy fur and scrapes, but their eyes shined with excitement.

"That was awesome, Waspfang!" said Sparrowpaw, a plump ginger tom. "I wish you were my mentor!"

"Yeah, me too!" said Nightpaw, a sleek charcoal black she-cat.

"And me!" said Chervilpaw, a white tom with thick fur and a short tail.

Waspfang grinned at the compliments. "I'll be working with you tomorrow too! And the other apprentices: Lionpaw, Breezepaw, and Cedarpaw."

The apprentices' eyes lit with excitement. "I can't wait," said Sparrowpaw, bouncing up and down. "I'll show them my new skills!"

The apprentices bounded off, seeming very happy. Waspfang padded over to the fresh-kill pile and grabbed a huge rabbit. He sat down next to Kestrelfur.

"Why are you spending so much time with the apprentices?" asked Kestrelfur.

"Because they're the future of the clan," he said, straightening

up. "I need to make sure they're strong enough to take good care of the clan."

Kestrelfur was surprised at how much he was planning ahead. "Is being deputy fun?"

Waspfang grinned. "Tons. I feel like I have a lot of control and I feel like I'm leaving a good impression on the clan—especially the younger ones."

Kestrelfur wondered what it would be like when she would become deputy. Unfortunately, that meant Beetlestar had to die, but it was her destiny. She couldn't wait to embrace it.

"Kestrelfur!" called someone. Cherrynose came bounding up beside them. "Kestrelfur, your mother wants to see you."

Kestrelfur exchanged a glance with Waspfang and rolled her eyes. "I'll be back."

Inside the medicine den all the nests were full of sick cats. There were much more now than there had been just a few days ago.

Morningleaf was lying in the same nest as before, and her eyes lit up when she saw Kestrelfur. "Sorry! I just needed someone to talk to."

Inwardly Kestrelfur rolled her eyes and came up beside her mother. "What?"

Morningleaf looked much better now than she had a few days ago. Her fur was neat—a sign that she had recently groomed herself. Her eyes were lit up and there was no snot coming down her nose. In a few days she'd go back to hiding in the hollow, being a complete waste.

"I heard Wasppaw became deputy," she said.

"It's Wasp*fang* now, Mom," said Kestrelfur angrily.

Morningleaf sighed. "Why did Beetlestar choose him? I know

most people wanted Duskleap, and not to brag, but I think he would've made an excellent deputy based on the training he gave me. Waspfang hasn't been a mentor, and he just became a warrior a few days ago!"

"Mom!" said Kestrelfur, curling her lip. "It's his destiny to be leader some day. StarClan *chose* him to be deputy."

Morningleaf sighed but didn't argue. "When I'm well again, I'm going to become a permanent resident of the nursery."

"Why?" Kestrelfur couldn't think of anything worse than that besides being an elder. You were practically wasting your life, just watching newborn kits all day, listening to the sound of squeaking.

"I like kits," she said. "And I decided that I can't hide in a hollow all the time. I have to do something for the clan. This way, I'll be helping new queens raise kits and I'll be helping them stay calm while they're pregnant. It will be less stress for Cherrynose, and I'll be helping the clan."

Kestrelfur shrugged. That job did sound perfect for her mother, so she might as well do it. Plus, that was a good sign she was recovering from Darkpatch's death and getting ready to move on.

"Just remember," said Morningleaf. "I don't know exactly what, but I have a bad feeling about Waspfang. Beware around him."

Kestrelfur suppressed a shudder. Hadn't she had a dream last night? Something with Briarwing and someone who shouldn't be where he was. What did it mean? Why would StarClan tell this to *her,* when they could've told it to Beetlestar or Cherrynose?

Kestrelfur left the medicine den, feeling chills down her spine. She felt like she could hear Briarwing's echoing voice.

Beware.

A/N::

There was some foreshadowing in this chapter, so what do you think it was, and based on it, what do you think will happen?

//Edited

» Chapter Sixteen «

A paw prodded Kestrelfur's side. She opened her eyes to see Waspfang's smiling face. Her heart fluttered and sparks tingled. "What?"

"Let's go out," he said in an excited whisper.

"Like, out of camp?" asked Kestrelfur.

Waspfang gave a crooked grin. "Yeah!"

It sounded fun, so Kestrelfur quietly got out of her nest and they exited the den.

The moon glittered brightly in the sky, lighting up the night. The camp was completely silent. By the dirtplace tunnel, two guards stood by the entrance: Cindertooth and a silver warrior.

"Why are there guards?" asked Kestrelfur, angling her ears to them.

"I suggested that we should put guards by the entrance to make sure we don't get attacked again," said Waspfang. "The clan hasn't needed guards before because we haven't been attacked within our own camp for a long, long time. Now that it has happened, I figured it was a good idea to post some guards."

"Good idea," said Kestrelfur with a smile.

Waspfang flicked his ear and then turned towards the entrance. He boldly walked forward, and the two guards jumped at his approach.

"Make it fast," growled Cindertooth.

Waspfang's grin widened. "I'm not making dirt. Me and Kestrelfur are just going to hang around the territory."

Kestrelfur came forward at the mention of her name. The two guards relaxed a little when they saw her.

"Alright," said the silver warrior. "But be careful."

As they walked through the dirtplace, Kestrelfur wrinkled her nose at the fowl stench; flies buzzed around the dirt. This was the only way in and out of camp, unless you wanted to shove your way through the dense trees and bushes.

Kestrelfur was relieved when they reached the end of the dirtplace and entered the forest. There were a lot of trees but it was still open to the sky. That's why they were called CloudClan. You could see the clouds from the ground.

"Come on," said Waspfang with a flick of his tail. He started running through the forest. Kestrelfur followed closely behind him.

They bolted through the forest, Kestrelfur hot on Waspfang's tail. She used to be a terrible runner, but now after several moons of apprentice training she turned out to be pretty fast. But no matter what, Waspfang was always faster.

You could see the muscles in his limbs rippling as he bolted. His sleek body moved swiftly through the air, his thick BrookClan-like paws hard on the ground.

He stopped by a tall tree and let Kestrelfur catch her breath. No matter how hard he ran, Waspfang never seemed out of breath.

His amber eyes glittered and his whiskers twitched. "There's a good view of the moon from here."

Kestrelfur looked up and realized he was right. The branches were parted so you could see the moon very clearly. It dazzled brightly in the sky, looking like a larger star.

Waspfang had a crooked grin in the starlight. "Let's climb this tree!"

Before Kestrelfur could say something, Waspfang bolted up the tree. He climbed it swiftly, leaping from branch to branch, heading

for the top.

Kestrelfur followed. She dug her claws into the bark and used her hind legs to push herself up. She clenched her teeth, wishing that tree climbing wasn't so hard and exerting. It felt like forever before she finally reached the top of the tree.

He flicked her with his tail. "Slow poke."

Kestrelfur couldn't think of a smart reply, so she cuffed him on the ear with a sheathed paw. He grinned and cuffed her back.

Waspfang looked charming in the moonlight. His eyes were lit up and his whiskers were crooked. His ginger pelt looked darker like a hungry flame, and his stripes looked like pits of darkness. But somehow all that made Kestrelfur's heart flutter more.

"I'm gonna show you something cool," he said with a flick of his ear. The wind blew so hard Kestrelfur almost didn't hear him. He stood up and started bouncing, making the branch lurch.

"Could you stop?" asked Kestrelfur. "The branch might snap."

Waspfang didn't reply. He started hollering out. "Whoo! Come out! Come out!"

Kestrelfur was about to ask what he was doing, when she heard the sound of flapping above her. She looked up to see small creatures with white wings flying off into the night—moths.

"That's cool," said Kestrelfur.

"Yeah," said Waspfang, who stopped bouncing and hollering. "But you haven't seen nothin' yet."

He launched himself down the tree, and Kestrelfur followed him, not nearly as graceful. On the ground, Waspfang launched himself into the bushes and started hollering again. The sound of fluttering wings could be heard. Tiny creatures started flying out.

"What?" asked Kestrelfur. Waspfang either didn't hear or didn't care; he kept running and shouting.

Suddenly thousands of moths appeared, storming out of the bushes all at once. They created a beautiful wall of snowy white, and the soft sound of rain. There were more moths then she could count. In fact, Kestrelfur hadn't realized there were so many moths in the whole forest.

And through the wall of white wings, Waspfang suddenly appeared next to her, grinning happily.

"Wow," said Kestrelfur.

Waspfang flicked an ear. "Yeah, I know."

A few more moths went fluttering by.

Waspfang leaned forward. "There is a whole nest of moths somewhere nearby—maybe two. I thought I'd show you them."

"Hmm," said Kestrelfur with a smile.

Suddenly a huge white moth appeared and landed on Waspfang's nose. It fluttered its wings a little, and Waspfang gave a startled jump. "It tickles."

Kestrelfur laughed and gave him a shove, the moth flying away as she did so.

They looked into each other's eyes, sparks tingling under their pelts. Sparks surged under Kestrefur's pelt so hard that for a second she forgot where she was, who she was. She flew off through the air into someplace distant. When she slowly came back to reality, her muzzle was pressed into Waspfang's.

Kestrelfur felt like her mind sharpen, waking up again. Sparks surged under her fur. She could see three small kits, two looking like Waspfang and one looking like her. She could hear them shouting, "Mommy! Daddy!"

Then her mind calmed. The whole forest opened up around her. She could hear the buzz of every insect, smell every mouse. She could hear paws thrumming somewhere far away. She felt like the forest itself.

Waspfang appeared in front of her, and she landed back in reality again. He felt warm and soft; she could hear his quiet heartbeat.

They disconnected their muzzles, and Waspfang gave her a friendly lick on her cheek.

In the distance they could see the sun starting to rise, the first hint of dawn.

"I guess we should get back to camp," said Waspfang.

"Whatever you say," said Kestrelfur, giving him a lick. "Deputy."

They walked back to camp side by side, their tails entwined together like one. They walked into camp with their pelts brushing.

"You're dismissed," said Waspfang to the guards, nodding. The silver warrior immediately went for the warriors den, but Cindertooth stayed behind and slowly smiled. "You already found that special she-cat?"

"We're destined for eachother," said Waspfang flatly. "I already knew I found my special she-cat the moment I saw her."

Kestrelfur's heart twisted. That comment seemed so romantic and lovey, it was disgusting.

"Whatever," said Cindertooth with a snort. "Just don't think you're all that now that you were made deputy only days after you were made a warrior."

Cindertooth stalked off. Waspfang and Kestrelfur silently followed him into the warriors' den.

"Do you believe in StarClan?" asked Kestrelfur curiously as she layed down in her nest.

Waspfang shrugged. "I'm not sure. Obviously there's some destiny for us, but is it from StarClan? A group of magical dead cats is just hard to believe."

"But they sent you an omen, right?" said Kestrelfur uncertainly. Waspfang shrugged. "I guess... they kinda did."

Kestrelfur rested her muzzle on her paws. "I'm not sure either. I kind of have my doubts."

Kestrelfur always had a hard time believing in StarClan. They just seemed like kit tales.

But then she thought back to her dream of Briarwing. Was it real, was it StarClan reaching out to her? Or was it just a dream her troubled mind created? It seemed fuzzy now, all the detail gone. That was a sign it was probably just a dream.

With these thoughts, she slowly and gently closed her eyes, feeling the world fade around her.

Then she was in deep sleep.

A/N::

Any predictions? I'd love to hear in the comments! And don't forget to vote if you enjoy :3

//Edited

» Chapter Seventeen «

Kestrelfur pressed her stomach to the ground, slowly moving forward, not making a sound. The squirrel was chewing on a nut, unaware that it was being stalked.

Kestrelfur was close enough to pounce. All her attention was focused on the squirrel in front of her.

Snap!

A broken twig was underneath her paw. The squirrel froze, then bolted away quickly, climbing a tree faster than any CloudClan cat could.

"Fox-dung," Kestrelfur muttered under her breath. She hadn't caught one thing the whole day. She had to catch something; it would be shameful to walk into camp without a catch.

But her eyelids felt heavy. She had barely gotten any sleep last night, being out with Waspfang. She wanted nothing more than curl up in her nest.

It won't be that bad if I don't catch anything, she thought. *At least I have an excuse. Beetlestar will have mercy; he is merciful on everyone.*

Kestrelfur heard the sound of flapping. A sparrow flew by, landing in the grass in front of her. It started pecking at the nut the squirrel had left behind, unaware of what was in front of it.

Kestrelfur sat back on her haunches. Hopefully this would be an easy catch; it was already right in front of her.

She slowly and quietly took a few pawsteps forward. It was in pouncing distance, still unaware it was being watched.

She clumsily leaped in the air, leaves skidding under her paws as she did so. This alerted the sparrow's attention and it opened its wings and started taking flight.

Kestrelfur stretched her paws out in an attempt to catch it, but the sparrow was too high and out of her reach.

"Fox-dung," she muttered again. She clearly wasn't going to catch anything, so maybe it was better to give up.

"I don't like Waspfang, there's something off about him." It came from a voice just north of Kestrelfur.

"He shouldn't have been made deputy," spat another voice. Kestrelfur stretched her ears forward, trying to hear more.

The next voice was quieter, so Kestrelfur only picked out the words 'BrookClan' and 'terrible'.

It probably wasn't of her concern, but Kestrelfur started creeping forward anyway. She followed the voices until she could see them: Cindertooth, a gray and white warrior named Thundercloud, Crookedtail, and.... Kestrelfur blinked in surprise. Her own mother, Morningleaf.

This morning Cherrynose announced Morningleaf was over her illness, so she officially became a nursery resident and was allowed to leave camp again. But what was she doing, talking to the three warriors who loved to cause trouble?

"He's half-clan!" growled Thundercloud, thrashing her tail. Thundercloud was a huge warrior, with a thick build. She was light gray with white legs and ears. "That makes him more likely to betray the clan."

Kestrelfur wanted to hear exactly what they were talking about, so she hid behind a bush so she could listen safely without being caught.

It was Crookedtail who spoke next. "I know! I hate him. What's worse is my daughter, Nightpaw, won't shut up about him. She thinks he's as great as StarClan and all that. Personally, I don't trust him."

"My daughter seems to like him too," said Morningleaf quietly. "And what I don't like is that he's half BrookClan. BrookClan is the clan

that killed Darkpatch."

Kestrelfur hadn't known that. Morningleaf rarely talked about Darkpatch, usually because it made her sad. It gave Kestrelfur an ache knowing that BrookClan was the clan that killed him.

"He was a terrible apprentice," said Cindertooth. "He kept bragging how he'd become leader, kept calling himself Waspstar instead of Wasp-paw. The only thing I liked about him was how serious he took battle training."

"Honestly I don't get Beetlestar," said Thundercloud. "He's too trusting in StarClan—which might not even exist. Someone could've easily faked the signs—or maybe it was simply a coincidence."

Everyone nodded except for Morningleaf, who looked shocked to hear they doubted the existence of StarClan.

"Waspfang can't be trusted," said Crookedtail. "No one becomes deputy after *just* becoming a warrior. Plus his father is *Thistleleap*. Not only is he BrookClan, but he's also a traitor to his clan and doesn't even seem guilty about it. Waspfang shouldn't even exist."

There were a few murmurs of agreement.

"Plus, what's worse is that Beetlestar has blackcough," said Thundercloud. "So he may think if Beetlestar dies he'll be made leader."

Blackcough? Kestrelfur shivered. She had heard of it only once. She couldn't remember much, other than that it was worse than greencough and there was little hope of surviving. But Beetlestar had multiple lives, so if he lost one it wouldn't be a big deal.

"Let's just hope he never becomes leader," said Morningleaf.

"Yeah," said Cindertooth, thrashing his tail. "Like he needs something else to add to his ego."

The group started breaking up, and Kestrelfur crouched behind the bush to avoid being seen. She waited until their pawsteps faded before coming out.

Why didn't they trust Waspfang? He hadn't done anything wrong and he couldn't help that his father was a traitor. Besides, he was supposed to become leader, so it was going to happen eventually.

Maybe sooner than they realize, thought Kestrelfur. If Beetlestar really had blackcough, maybe he was about to lose all his lives and Waspfang would become leader.

Kestrelfur started padding back to camp, quickly grabbing something out of the fresh-kill pile once she got there to cover that she hadn't caught anything. She yawned before taking a bite out of her thrush.

"Help me! Help me!" yowled Cherrynose, running over to Kestrelfur. Her eyes were wild and her fur was fluffed up. "Beetlestar has blackcough, and I need you to go out and grab as much catmint as you can find."

"But I don't even know what it looks like," said Kestrelfur.

Cherrynose sighed heavily. "This is exactly why I need an apprentice! None of the kits in the nursery are ever interested. Sooner or later I'll just have to pick one to be my apprentice, whether they like it or not. Catmint is leafy and actually smells good. It's usually found closer by the GladeClan side of the territory, by that old Twoleg shed. Now go! Beetlestar is waiting!"

Before Kestrelfur could object Cherrynose hurried back to the medicine den, ordering someone to help the elders with their ticks on the way.

"Great," Kestrelfur muttered. She still had no idea what catmint looked like. There were a lot of things that looked leafy. And why was it always her that got told to do these things? It was *never* anybody else.

Rainfoot came padding into camp, Violetheart at his side. Violetheart padded off, leaving Rainfoot looking very happy.

Kestrelfur padded up to him. "Did Violetheart actually talk to you?"

Rainfoot nodded dreamily.

Kestrelfur flicked an ear. "Great. So... Cherrynose ordered me to get catmint and I was wondering if you could help me."

Rainfoot nodded. "Sure. Is greencough still going around? It's surprising how bad it is, seeing how it's greenleaf, not even leafbare."

"Yeah," said Kestrelfur. "And apparently Beetlestar has blackcough."

Rainfoot's eyes widened. "I didn't know that actually existed. We must hurry."

They padded out of camp, heading in the direction of the Twoleg shed. The Twoleg shed was closer to the GladeClan border, abandoned by Twolegs long ago. It was unknown why they left it. Maybe a fox or badger drove them out a long time ago.

"Don't forget to always be loyal to your clan," came Waspfang's voice, stopping them in their tracks. "Clan before blood."

"Clan before blood," a group of apprentices echoed.

"What's Waspfang teaching them?" asked Rainfoot with wide eyes. Kestrelfur shrugged.

Rainfoot started padding closer. Kestrelfur rolled her eyes and muttered "Mouse-brain" under her breath, but followed.

Waspfang and the apprentices were in a clearing. The three new apprentices, Nightpaw, Chervilpaw, and Sparrowpaw stood side by side, gazing at Waspfang proudly. The older three, Lionpaw, Cedarpaw, and Breezepaw stood off to the side, looking less interested. None of their mentors were in sight.

"Beetlestar has blackcough," said Waspfang. "And he's old. He won't be with us much longer. So we must forget him and look to the future. Do what's good for the clan."

The three younger apprentices nodded. "You're the best," called Sparrowpaw. Waspfang smiled proudly.

"I will do what's best for the clan. We must forget Beetlestar and

know that I'm the clan's future. I will make the clan strong again. Beetlestar doesn't have the strength to do that."

"You could easily take him down in a fight," said Nightpaw, swiping a paw in the air. Lionpaw shifted uncomfortably as she said that.

"Exactly. He's weak. We must remember that he's making the clan weaker," said Waspfang. "The key to having a strong clan is to get rid of the weak and the ones who aren't loyal. We must train harder."

"I'll always be loyal and strong," said Chervilpaw, puffing out his chest.

"I'll be the most loyal," said Sparrowpaw.

Waspfang nodded approvingly. "Yes. I'm the future to the clan, so you must be loyal to me. Beetlestar is almost gone. I will be the leader soon, and I will make CloudClan strong."

"Hooray!" cheered the younger apprentices. Breezepaw also joined in their celebration, but Lionpaw and Cedarpaw remained quiet.

Rainfoot's eyes widened. "Why does he keep telling them that Beetlestar is gone? He's still alive and a good leader."

Kestrelfur shrugged. "Does it matter? Let's just go and get the catmint." Though she didn't say it out loud, Waspfang was also making her uncomfortable. He had no reason to make the apprentices think they had a bad leader.

Rainfoot nodded quietly and they started heading towards the Twoleg shed with an awkward silence.

A/N::

Thank you for reading! Again, if you have any thoughts, share them in the comments.

//Edited

» Chapter Eighteen «

A cold wind blew, making the trees rustle under the full moon. Tonight was the Gathering, the only time the clans were at a truce and could greet each other as friends instead of enemies.

Kestrelfur padded beside Waspfang, who had his shoulders back and chest puffed out. Since Beetlestar had blackcough, Waspfang had to fill in for him at the Gathering.

Kestrelfur was bubbling with excitement. This was her fourth Gathering overall, but her first one as a warrior. She was excited to hear what the other leaders had to say, though none of the other clans seemed as interesting as CloudClan.

"Do you think MarshClan will be mad?" asked Kestrelfur.

"Probably," grunted Waspfang. "But if they are we could easily take them."

"Hmm," said Kestrelfur with a smile, imagining a full-scale battle happening in front of all the clans. It would be chaotic, but kind of cool. Well... actually, that wouldn't be very good.

Waspfang shrugged, looking more playful now. "It's weird how it's so cold out here in greenleaf. Though I guess leaf-fall is just around the corner."

"Yeah," said Kestrelfur, slapping him in the face with her tail.

They left their territory and entered the Unclaimed territory, south of all the clans. That was where the Moonboulders and the Star Tree was, where the Gathering would be held.

When they arrived by the massive tree, all the clans had already arrived but GladeClan. All the clans were mixed together. The senior warriors went to meet with their friends, younger warriors tried to make new friends. The three youngest CloudClan

apprentices: Sparrowpaw, Nightpaw, and Chervilpaw were at their first Gathering and were looking around with awe.

"Hey there," said a silver she-cat, padding up to Kestrelfur. They had met two Gatherings ago. Her name was Falconpaw and she was a BrookClan apprentice.

"Let's see if I can get this right this time," she said. Every Gathering she accidentally called Kestrelfur *Brownpaw*. "Your name is... Kestrelpaw, right?"

"Actually it's Kestrel*fur* now," said Kestrelfur proudly, flicking an ear.

Falconpaw's eyes widened. "Aww, lucky. Perhaps by next Gathering I'll be a warrior. I wasn't apprenticed much later than you."

A new scent wafted into the clearing as the GladeClan cats filed in and their leader climbed the boulders surrounding the tree.

"Let's go find a spot to sit up front," said Falconpaw eagerly. Kestrelfur didn't care where they sat, so she followed along.

The four leaders climbed onto the four large rocks, each the size of the Grand Rock, that surrounded the Star Tree. Their deputies sat right below them, and the medicine cats sat at the very front. Waspfang stood on CloudClan's rock since Beetlestar wasn't there, looking just as tall and commanding as a leader. Next to him Stormstar, the leader of MarshClan, was glaring at him suspiciously.

The cats started quieting down to hear what the leaders had to say. Waspfang immediately started speaking before any other leader could.

"I have recently been made deputy after Briarwing was found dead. Beetlestar hasn't been feeling well and, since I'm the deputy, I'm filling in for him."

"That's terrible news!" said Harestar, the leader of GladeClan. "I hope Beetlestar starts feeling well and that Briarwing is welcomed among StarClan."

Several other GladeClan cats murmured agreements, while BrookClan and MarshClan remained silent.

"GladeClan," muttered Falconpaw. "They're way too caring to the other clans. In battle they wouldn't be able to lay a scratch on any of us."

"Yeah," said Kestrelfur with a small laugh. For some reason, talking about other clans' weaknesses made her both excited and anxious.

"Despite some rough turns this moon," said Waspfang, "CloudClan has pulled through and is doing well. We also have a new warrior: Kestrelfur."

A few eyes turned to her, and she straightened up under the attention. She looked bold even though inside her chest hurt with the pressure of knowing all eyes were on her.

"Wasn't Waspfang an apprentice last moon?" asked Falconpaw. "Why is he suddenly deputy now?"

"StarClan sent an omen," said Kestrelfur proudly.

Falconpaw crouched a little lower. "Aww that sounds cool," she said with a hint of jealousy in her voice.

"We also have three new apprentices," said Waspfang. "And I'm very proud of them. Sparrowpaw, Nightpaw, and Chervilpaw."

Mews of congratulation filled the clearing. The three apprentices looked proud to be complimented in front of everyone, and they straightened up like Waspfang always does.

"I don't get the big deal," muttered Falconpaw. "Who cares about other clans' accomplishments? No offense."

"Too bad you weren't born in CloudClan," said Kestrelfur. "CloudClan is the best clan."

Falconpaw snorted. "Of course you would say that. That's what every cat says about their clan. It's what I say about my clan."

Waspfang stepped back and Harestar, leader of GladeClan, stepped forward. "Everything has been going well. Prey has been good and one of our queens, Dawnheart, has given birth to a litter of three kits."

More murmurs of congratulation ran through the crowd. After that Harestar went on how beautiful their territory was looking and how nice the other clans' were being. Then Newtstar, the BrookClan leader, stepped up.

"This time of year the brooks and streams are running well with fish," she said. "And there hasn't been a lot of Twoleg activity."

"She says that," muttered Falconpaw, "but just the other day there was a strange Twoleg den close to camp. Their kits disrupted the fish. They left now, thank StarClan, but they were annoying while they were there."

Kestrelfur smiled. "I guess BrookClan isn't perfect."

After Newtstar finished with her report Stormstar stepped up. He was the biggest leader—even bigger than Waspfang. Every part of his body was ripped with muscle and he had a scar going down his left cheek. His brown eyes were dark, making him seem more like a wild animal.

"MarshClan is strong," he said. He had a low, rumbly voice. "And despite the fact that we've had a few boundary issues—" he shot a meaningful glance at Waspfang, who gave him one in return "—MarshClan has been doing well."

"Boo!" shouted Cindertooth.

"Boo!" joined in Thundercloud and Crookedtail.

Soon many CloudClan warriors were booing at MarshClan. The MarshClan warrirors were shooting hostile glances at CloudClan.

"What's going on between MarshClan and CloudClan?" asked Falconpaw.

"MarshClan ambushed us in our camp one morning because they

keep claiming we're trespassing even though I only trespassed *once* on mistake," said Kestrelfur. "But that was when I had *just* become an apprentice—about six moons ago! They just won't let it go."

Falconpaw snorted a laugh. "Wow. That's just... hilarious. Typical MarshClan, never letting things go."

Kestrelfur laughed too. "Seriously StarClan, they need to chill."

Duskleap glared at them again; Kestrelfur rolled her eyes. Duskleap was being really annoying. They never got to see each other since they were from different clans; why couldn't they talk?

Waspfang looked just like a leader on the rock and glared at Stormstar, who was glaring back. "Keep your warriors on *your* side of the border," Stormstar snarled.

"We haven't done anything," replied Waspfang, anger in his breath.

Harestar and Newtstar looked awkward standing between the two hostile cats. Looking at each other with weird glances.

Stormstar's pelt fluffed up. "We're leaving. If we find CloudClan scent on our side of the border again we'll do more than ambush you."

"I'd like to see you try," hissed Waspfang, jumping off the rock. The other leaders followed, and the Gathering broke up.

"Whoah," breathed Falconpaw. "I haven't heard of a Gathering going like that in a long time. That was intense."

"Yeah," muttered Kestrelfur. She felt anxiety fluttering under her pelt.

They parted and followed their clans. A MarshClan tom bumped into Kestrelfur on the way, nearly knocking her over. He snarled at her to stay out of the way, and Kestrelfur replied with an angry hiss.

When they got back to camp everyone who had gone to the Gathering was talking loudly about MarshClan, while Cherrynose

and Waspfang were discussing it with Beetlestar in the medicine den.

Kestrelfur was surprised to feel a tap on her shoulder, and she turned around to see Morningleaf there. "I heard the Gathering went bad."

Kestrelfur ignored her. She didn't want to talk about the Gathering at the moment; she had other matters to discuss with her Mom. "Why were you gossiping about Waspfang with Cindertooth, Thundercloud, and Crookedtail?" she asked, the words coming out harsher than she meant them to.

Morningleaf's eyes widened. "You heard that?"

"Yes," said Kestrelfur angrily.

Morningleaf looked away. "We just have our opinions." Kestrelfur grinded her teeth. Her mother had the personality of a kit, not a grown queen.

"I might start a new litter," she said brightly.

Kestrelfur blinked. "What? Really?" She tried to shove her anger out of the way, but her fur bristled anyway. Her mother had just used it to change the subject! She might even be making it up. "With who?" she asked suspiciously.

Morningleaf inhaled as though nervous to tell. "Crookedtail."

A/N::

Thank you for reading! I know it's going a little slow, but eventually I'll get through the first stage of editing :)

//Edited

» Chapter Nineteen «

"Mom, you're going to have to get up so I can place this moss down," mumbled Kestrelfur with moss in her mouth.

"Sorry," said Morningleaf quietly. She squinted as she got up as though it took effort, and maybe it did. Her belly was swollen from being pregnant with her and Crookedtail's kits. It had been two moons ago when Kestrelfur had found out that she wanted to start a litter with him, and Kestrelfur still couldn't understand why she chose him.

Kestrelfur set the new moss down in place of the old moss. She was a little upset that she had been doing more and more apprentice duties lately while Waspfang took the apprentices out training every single day.

"Thanks for changing our moss," said the other nursery queen, Acornfrost. Her three kits were bouncing up and down beside her.

"Are you Waspfang's mate?" asked one of her kits, Emberkit. "You're lucky; he's so cool!"

"He's going to make us the best warriors ever!" said another one of her kits, Redkit.

"Well..." said the third one, pawing the ground. Her name was Vixenkit. "I'm kind of interested in being a medicine cat. It seems like it would be fun to learn all the herbs."

Cherrynose will be thanking StarClan that a kit finally wants to be a medicine cat, thought Kestrelfur.

She left the nursery and looked around for Rainfoot. She wanted to tease him about his recent relationship with Violetheart.

She saw him sharing prey with Violetheart, talking happily to each other. Kestrelfur suddenly felt different, seeing them so close,

and she marched up to them.

When they didn't notice, she cuffed Rainfoot on the ear to alert his attention. It worked; he sat up immediately and turned around. "Why'd you do that?"

Kestrelfur laughed. "You should see yourself. Your fur is all fluffed up."

Violetheart was smiling too. "You do look kind of funny."

Rainfoot looked embarrassed and sat down again without saying a word.

That wasn't as fun as Kestrelfur had hoped. She tried to ignore the aching in her chest as she turned away from him. Rainfoot didn't like her anymore.

At least she had Waspfang.

Kestrelfur grabbed a squirrel and started eating it, trying not to look at Violetheart and Rainfoot. Waspfang was still out training with the apprentices, like usual. She didn't understand why he was so focused on making them the best. They were just apprentices.

Then the three apprentices padded back into camp. All of them solemnly padded up and took one piece of fresh-kill for themselves. Once they sat down, they started talking about training.

"Waspfang is even better than my own mentor. He's going to be the leader, and I'll serve him," said Sparrowpaw.

"We might as well start calling him Waspstar," said Chervilpaw with a mouth full of food.

Nightpaw nudged him. "We're supposed to look like loyal and dignified warriors. We can't talk with our mouths full!"

They both nodded quietly, as both their mouths were filled with prey.

Kestrelfur sighed inwardly. She hated to admit it, but lately

she had been feeling left out. Rainfoot was hanging out with Violetheart, Waspfang was always busy with the kits and apprentices, and her relationship with her mother was pretty much out the window. It was making her frustrated because she had never felt so alone. When she was an apprentice, she was on top. Noticed. Now she felt invisible, and she felt like she had to do something to get noticed. She clenched her teeth.

After lunch Kestrelfur went out collecting catmint for Cherrynose. Apparently all the apprentices were busy with Waspfang. After Beetlestar lost two lives to blackcough and the elder, Yellowfur, lost her life to greencough, Cherrynose really wanted to stock up. Especially since it was leaf-fall and leafbare would be approaching soon.

When she returned to camp the sun was setting and the camp was full. Everyone was gathered around the fresh-kill pile and eating—everyone except Beetlestar and Waspfang.

Kestrelfur decided not to ponder where they went. Wherever it was, she wasn't there so it wasn't her problem. She grabbed a shrew from the fresh-kill pile and angrily sat down, away from Rainfoot and Violetheart. She wondered how she went from being loved by all to feeling invisible. She had to do *something* to get noticed again.

Just then, Waspfang bolted into camp. He was gasping for breath, and the fear and shock in his gaze was genuine.

The entire clan sat up and began to crowd around him. Kestrelfur padded up beside him. She had never seen Waspfang so distraught.

"What is it?" she asked quietly. He didn't seem to hear her.

"Waspfang?" asked someone else. It sounded like one of the apprentices.

He snapped out of it and straightened up, his breaths becoming even again. "Beetlestar..." he said. "He—I saw his body. Covered in blood. There were claw marks across his neck."

He paused, eyeing everyone, almost suspiciously.

"He's been murdered."

A/N::

Hey guys! Things are about to get intense! Please keep reading because you do NOT want to miss out on all the craziness that's about to unfold. Everything has been leading up to this moment. Waspfang will embrace his destiny and become Waspstar!

What will happen? Any predictions? Don't forget to comment and vote!

//Edited

» Chapter Twenty «

A collective gasp ran through the clan. Kestrelfur felt shocked to hear it—*who would murder a clan leader?*
She felt her heart race. Even though at times she didn't agree with Beetlestar, like when they were punished as apprentices, she felt sad to hear the death of their clan leader.

Waspfang led the clan through the forest to the spot where Beetlestar's corpse lay. Kestrelfur had to shove her way through to see it.

Beetlestar's underbelly was sliced open with sticky red blood on the gash—still fresh. A huge claw mark ran all the way through his throat, cutting through the other side. His eyes were wide open but lifeless, staring up at the setting sun.

"Who would murder him?" whispered Rainfoot quietly beside Kestrelfur.

Kestrelfur shook her head, unsure. For some strange reason, she felt the urge to curl up against him, but when Violetheart came up on his other side, she decided not to.

"We must give Beetlestar a proper burial," announced Waspfang, his voice caked in sadness. Then with rage, he added, "I'll find out who the murderer was."

Cherrynose brought out several bizarre herbs, which the elders rubbed on Beetlestar's body to disguise the scent of death. Then they buried his body next to Briarwing's, just outside the camp entrance.

"Not another cat," murmured the elder, Speckleface. "Death is merciless. First it takes my daughter, then Beetlestar. There is nothing to live for in this world."

Another elder rested his tail on her shoulders, but Speckleface

shoved it off. "When I die, I'd like to be buried right here, right next to my daughter," she said with a great amount of stubborness.

The clan hovered around Beetlestar's burial spot for several minutes before Waspfang ordered everyone back into camp.

Waspfang leaped up on Grand Rock and stood there, gazing over the clan. "We have had a great loss. Beetlestar had been leader for many moons, but StarClan knew it was his time. We all knew he wouldn't be leader for much longer with only one life. He will be well looked after in StarClan. Most of you probably want to grieve for a while, but we must move on and start taking care of the clan. I'll start by appointing a deputy."

Despite the sadness, Kestrelfur bounced because she already knew it was her. She had been destined to be deputy. It was her time.

"It will be Duskleap this time!" someone called out.

Waspfang ignored and started the ceremony. "I say these words before StarClan, so that the spirits of our warrior ancestors may hear and approve of my choice. The new deputy of CloudClan is Kestrelfur."

Several surprised gasps ran through the crowd.

"She hasn't been a mentor yet," snarled Cindertooth, shoving his way to the front. "That's against the warrior code!"

Waspfang gave him a withering stare. "I'm the leader now, and the leader's word is law. I have already appointed Kestrelfur deputy, so there is no changing it. If you ever doubt me again, you can just leave."

Waspfang said each word so harshly that even Cindertooth slumped a little and gave a reluctant nod. *Wow,* thought Kestrelfur, a little surprised. *And to think Cindertooth used to be his mentor!*

Waspfang took his gaze off of him and addressed to the whole clan, "A clan is all about loyalty. Your will to protect it, die for it, and follow your leader's orders. Everything I do is for a reason, so

don't doubt me. Whatever I do is intended to make CloudClan stronger."

Waspfang turned to Cherrynose. "I'm ready to travel to the Telling Stones to recieve my nine lives."

Cherrynose nodded. "I will prepare the traveling herbs."

Waspfang hesitated, then said, "I want Kestrelfur to come with me too."

Cherrynose looked surprised. "Then who will watch the camp?"

"I want the apprentices to watch the camp," said Waspfang.

Several yowls erupted. "Why the apprentices?" asked Cherrynose, her whiskers twitching. She didn't seem upset, just confused.

"Because they are strong and have proven their loyalty," said Waspfang. "I have been supervising their training, and they have made excellent progress. In fact, when I get back I'll make them warriors."

"Of course he will!" shouted Sparrowpaw proudly. "We're the most loyal cats in the clan!"

"But the younger ones only had three moons of training!" hissed Cindertooth.

"And they have been working very hard those three moons," growled Waspfang, narrowing his amber eyes at Cindertooth. "They're ready."

"But then there won't be any apprentices," said Cherrynose. "Acornfrost's kits still have another moon before they can be apprenticed."

Waspfang straightened up, preparing to address the entire clan. "I am moving the apprentice age to five moons. Six moons is much too long and I'd like to boost apprentice training."

"Did you hear that!" squeaked Redkit. "We're going to be apprentices!"

"Are you sure that's a good idea?" asked Cherrynose nervously.

"Of course I'm sure," snapped Waspfang. "I've been thinking about it for a while and I decided that a kit is ready to be apprenticed at five moons." Then, softer, he added, "Don't forget that I'm the leader now."

Cherrynose inhaled nervously but said nothing. "Then I guess I'll go prepare the traveling herbs." She hurried away as though trying to avoid more conversation.

Kestrelfur bolted up to Waspfang. "I can't believe it! You're *Waspstar* now."

Waspfang grinned. "No, not until I get my nine lives... though Waspstar has a nice ring to it. I won't mind if you keep calling me that."

Kestrelfur cuffed him on the ear. "You clearly want to change things."

"Yes," said Waspfang. "I'm going to make CloudClan strong."

Cherrynose poked her head out of the medicine cat den. "The traveling herbs are ready."

Waspfang grinned, though his eyes still held sadness from Beetlestar's death. "Time to officially become Waspstar," he says with a deep breath.

A/N::

So what do you think will happen now that Waspfang's leader? Also, don't forget to vote if you enjoyed!

//Edited

» Chapter Twenty-One «

[image]

Kestrelfur's pads hurt as they trekked through the open fields on their way to the Moonboulders, where Waspfang would receive his nine lives.

Waspfang was surprisingly quiet, considering that he had spent many days as an apprentice talking non-stop about becoming leader. Perhaps it was because of Beetlestar's death.

At long last they reached the Moonboulders. Three silver stones were lined up together, all stretching towards the stars and shining under the moonlight. Each of them seemed taller than the Grand Rock and more sophisticated.

Cherrynose stepped forward. "Remember that once the ceremony is over we can't speak until we get back to the territory. Once back, you may not talk about the ceremony with *anyone,* not even to each other. What happens at the ceremony stays at the ceremony."

Kestrelfur nodded silently. She wasn't sure she could keep it a secret. She could easily see herself accidentally blurting something out without even realizing it.

Cherrynose turned to the stones. "Press your muzzle to the stone and close your eyes." She padded up to the stones, her white fur looking silver in the starlight, and layed down in front of the stones. She then pressed her muzzle to it.

Waspfang was quick to follow. He bounded up and copied Cherrynose, pressing his muzzle to the silver stone. Kestrelfur layed right beside him and pressed her muzzle to the stone. It felt cold, like ice, and sent a shiver down her spine. She felt sparks tingling under her fur. She closed her eyes, feeling darkness wrap her up.

When she opened her eyes again she was standing in CloudClan's camp, right in front of Grand Rock. *What the fox?* she thought.

Wasn't I just at the Moonboulders?

"When do I get my nine lives?" asked Waspfang. His voice was coming from behind Kestrelfur, and she turned around to see him standing in front of the nursery with an excited glint in his eyes.

"StarClan will come soon," came Cherrynose's voice from Kestrelfur's right. She looked calm and serene, not afraid to meet StarClan. Then again, she has already met them before.

Just then a cat appeared on Grand Rock. He had light brown mottled fur underneath a coat of sparkling silver. He gracefully leaped down off of the giant rock and slowly turned his head to Kestrelfur.

"I'm proud of you," he murmured.

Kestrelfur narrowed her eyes. This cat looked familiar, though she couldn't place where she's seen him before."Who are you?"

The tom looked slightly hurt for a second. "I'm your father. Darkpatch."

Kestrelfur's eyes widened in shock. *My father. Darkpatch. This is really him. StarClan* is *real!*

She wasn't sure how to feel. She was happy to see her dad, sad knowing that he was dead, and angry that he never spoke to her.

Darkpatch turned away and padded up to Waspfang, touching his nose to his forehead. "With this life I give you patience. Use it well to tolerate others' mistakes and listen to your clan."

Waspfang's hairs rose on his back, and he bit his lip as though in pain. Then Darkpatch stepped back and walked over in front of the elders' den.

Waspfang shook his head as though clearing it, and he smiled. "One down. Eight more to go."

Kestrelfur was a little upset that Darkpatch hadn't came back over and talked to her. Didn't he care what had been going on in the

clan? Didn't he want to know how Morningleaf was doing? He just stood there, gazing at Waspfang, not even looking over at Kestrelfur.

Then another cat appeared on Grand Rock. She had silky gray fur with black spots on it like a leopard. Cherrynose gasped beside her.

That's when Kestrelfur remembered CloudClan's old medicine cat, Milkleaf. She leaped down from the Grand Rock and glanced at Cherrynose as she padded over to Waspfang. Cherrynose looked sad to see her former mentor.

Milkleaf touched her nose to Waspfang's forehead. "With this life I give you compassion. Use it well to care for cats, no matter what clan they're from or where they were born."

This time Waspfang breathed out slowly as though this life relaxed him. Milkleaf stepped back and gave a nod as she padded over beside Darkpatch.

The old elder, Yellowfur, was next to appear on Grand Rock. He had died when greencough overtook the camp. But now he didn't look like that old, aging elder with a gray muzzle. He looked young with a sleek pelt and muscles showing on his legs. He must've been a strong warrior before he became an elder.

He leaped down from Grand Rock and padded over to Waspfang, pressing his muzzle to his forehead. "With this life I give you mercy. Use it well to forgive others and give them second chances for their mistakes."

Waspfang's eye twitched as he received his third life. Yellowfur stepped back.

"Why are all my lives stuff about caring and forgiveness?" asked Waspfang. "Shouldn't they be about my boldness and bravery?"

Yellowfur's whiskers twicthed. "Your lives give you the skills you lack. Since you already have a lot of strength, you don't need to be given a life for it."

Waspfang looked satisfied as Yellowfur stepped back and padded

over to Milkleaf and Darkpatch.

A small kit appeared on the Grand Rock. She looked no more than a moon old, but she leaped down from the rock with grace. Kestrelfur was surprised to see such a young kit in StarClan.

"How did you die?" asked Kestrelfur. She couldn't believe a *kit* could die and end up here.

The kit turned her kit-blue gaze to her. "When I was born I was weak and could not survive. This is my clan now." Her voice was not that of a kit, but of a full-grown warrior. Perhaps that was the voice she would have had as a warrior if she had lived.

"Hello, brother," said the kit, gazing at Waspfang.

Waspfang blinked in surprise. "Buzzardkit?"

"What?" asked Kestrelfur. She had no idea Waspfang had a sister.

The kit padded over to Waspfang and had to crane her neck to press her muzzle on Waspfang's forehead. "With this life I give you selflessness. Use it well to not only be concerned with yourself, but all those around you."

Buzzardkit took a step back; Waspfang looked at a loss for words. Buzzardkit gave him a nod of approval and walked over to the rest.

That was the fourth, thought Kestrelfur. *So five more to go.*

The next cat was someone Kestrelfur had never seen before. The cat leaped down from Grand Rock and pressed his muzzle to Waspfang's forhead. "With this life I give you trust. Use it well to heed your clanmates' advice and put faith in others."

Waspfang's body shook and he gritted his teeth as though biting back a yowl. Kestrelfur never thought that getting nine lives would be painful.

When the cat stepped back and joined the others, another cat came down from Grand Rock that Kestrelfur didn't recognize. The cat stepped up and pressed her muzzle to his forehead. "With this life I

give you resilience. Use it well to keep your clan going during tough times."

Waspfang's body shook once more, and he let out a grunt as the she-cat turned away. *Three left,* thought Kestrelfur. *Hang in there, Waspfang!*

The next cat who appeared on Grand Rock was Briarwing. She quickly leaped down from the giant rock, her limbs looking strong as she did so.

Kestrelfur looked at her, wondering if she would look back. Did she remember when she had visited her two moons ago? Or perhaps that was just a dream Kestrelfur had.

But Briarwing didn't have the same happiness the other cats before her had. She looked angry as she stared at Waspfang and started padding towards him. Waspfang looked a little uncomfortable too. Anxious, even, at the sight of her.

Briarwing quickly shoved her nose onto Waspfang's forehead, using so much force he staggered a little bit. "With this life I give you nobility," she growled. "Use it well to choose the right path for your clan... no matter what."

Waspfang's pelt fluffed up as he received his next life. He let out a yowl of pain and collapsed on the ground. Briarwing actually seemed a little satisfied to see him like that and padded over to the rest of the StarClan cats.

Kestrelfur was shocked that Briarwing seemed so upset with Waspfang. *But why would she hate him?* she wondered. *She has no reason to.*

The next cat was again someone she didn't recognize. The cat pressed his muzzle to Waspfang's forehead. "With this life I give you understanding that size isn't everything. Use it well to repect all cats —even ones who don't seem to have a purpose."

Waspfang winced as the next life came. The eighth cat padded away, leaving only one life left.

The last cat was a black tom with white paws and a leafy green gaze. Beetlestar looked proud standing on the rock, it could almost make you forget he was dead. Beetlestar leaped down from the rock and gazed across the clearing, then gazed at Waspfang. His eyes were filled with some sort of sadness, like regret. Waspfang had that same awkward look on his face that he had with Briarwing.

Beetlestar sighed and padded over to Waspfang, almost looking as though he were taking his time. He pressed his nose to Waspfang's forehead and gave him his final life. "With this life I give you humility. Use it well to respect others."

Waspfang looked calm as the last life flowed into him. His shoulders relaxed and he let out a long breath. Beetlestar stepped back and gazed across the camp. "I hail you by your new name, Waspstar. Your old life is no more. You have now received the nine lives of a leader, and StarClan grants you the guardianship of CloudClan. Defend it well; care for young and old; honor your ancestors and the traditions of the warrior code; live each life with pride and dignity."

"Waspstar! Waspstar!"

The chant broke out among StarClan cats. Kestrelfur joined in too, trying to shout his new name the loudest. Waspstar looked proud, but there was also an underlying emotion... *guilt? But why would he be guilty?* wondered Kestrelfur. *He had nothing to be guilty about....*

Right?

A/N::

I recently added in Buzzardkit, it used to be just a random kit. I did this because I changed the prologue where Waspstar had a dead sister who didn't survive past kit-hood. If you go back and read the prologue you will know who Buzzardkit is.

So, now that Waspstar is officially leader, what do you think will happen?

Image from anticruelty.org

//**Edited**

» Chapter Twenty-Two «

[image]

Waspstar had already gained the respect of most of the clan after being leader for only two sunrises. The former apprentices, Sparrowclaw, Nightblaze, and Chervilfang, never left Waspstar's side, watching him and everyone around him like guards. He had also gained the respect of all the younger warriors, most of which seemed like they would follow his every order. Only a few senior warriors and the elders seemed to have doubts in him.

Kestrelfur liked that he agreed to assign patrols so that she didn't have to. She had tried and utterly failed the morning after he got his nine lives, so he kindly said that he would do it.

Waspstar padded up beside Kestrelfur as she hovered in front of the fresh-kill pile and gave her a friendly lick. Sparrowclaw was standing beside him, looking around as though daring anyone to come and attack him.

"Any sign of kits yet?" asked Waspstar warmly. Kestrelfur shook her head. "No visions and no signs of pregnancy."

At least I don't think I've had any signs of pregnancy, thought Kestrelfur. Though she had no idea what signs of pregnancy were.

Waspstar flicked an ear. "Well, when you have another vison I'd love to know. I can't wait to be a father." His eyes filled with warmth as though he already loved their kits with all his heart.

Kestrelfur grinned. "What's it like being leader?"

"The best," said Waspstar. "Together we're going to do good for the clan—all the clans!"

Kestrelfur felt sparks flick under her pelt.

"Waspstar! Waspstar!"

The holler came from their right. Sparrowclaw protectively moved in front of Waspstar and unsheathed his paws as though preparing to fight off whoever was coming.

"Relax," said Waspstar. "It's just the apprentices."

The two littermates, Emberpaw and Redpaw, had just begun their apprentice training when Waspstar had come back from the Telling Stones. Their sister, Vixenpaw, had decided to become Cherrynose's apprentice so she could be a medicine cat.

Sparrowclaw stepped out of the way but still kept his eyes on then warily, as though they might attack at any moment.

"Could you watch this battle move I just learned and give me feedback?" asked Emberpaw.

"Mine too!" said Redpaw.

"Of course," said Waspstar warmly. "You can come to me for anything."

Emberpaw unsheathed his claws and leaped in the air as though leaping onto someone. Then he raked his claws into the dirt as through shredding a warrior's pelt.

"That was good," said Waspstar with an approving nod. "But I'd suggest leaping onto the ground next to them, far back so they can't see you. If you're on top of them they can knock you off and pin you down."

Emberpaw nodded his head, sinking in his words like a sponge. Redpaw went next, doing exactly what Waspstar had said.

"That was better," said Waspstar. "But be quicker. I'd suggest darting underneath them and rake their underbelly. Use your small size as an advantage."

Both the apprentices nodded and darted over to their mentors.

Sparrowclaw sneared. "They looked awful. They're so small that they'll never be good warriors."

Waspstar gave him an annoyed look. "They had just started training two days ago. For so little experience they did excellent."

Sparrowclaw didn't argue. Kestrelfur had never liked Sparrowclaw, always acting as though he were superior and making fun of every mistake someone made. He was so annoying that Kestrelfur didn't know why Waspstar spent so much time with him.

Rainfoot padded out of the medicine den, smelling like mouse bile. Kestrelfur bounded over to him and gave him a friendly shove. "Do you always smell like this?"

Rainfoot laughed. "Very funny."

His response surprised Kestrelfur because it wasn't like him to respond to jokes that way. *Violetheart's rubbing off on him,* she thought with a surprising ache. *Why in StarClan do I feel this way? I shouldn't feel this way! I'm with Waspstar!*

Less friendly, she harshly cuffed him on the ear. "Surprise attack!"

Rainfoot shook his head, looking a little nervous now. "I've... got to go hunting."

He bounded away as though afraid she'd cuff him again. "Wimp!" she called out, hoping someone would laugh, but no one did. In fact, a few cats gave her annoyed looks. *Why isn't this funny?*

Just then, Violetheart padded into camp with two voles in her mouth and delivered them to the elders den. Seeing her made Kestrelfur upset, so she looked away and exited camp through the dirtplace.

Once in the woods, she decided she'd hunt. As she was about to start, there was a flash in front of her. She saw three kits, two mottled she-cats and one tabby ginger tom. They sat underneath Grand Rock, which Waspstar stood on.

But what was most disturbing were the bones that littered across the camp. Some were bones of prey, others looked almost like cat bones.

Many cats had their heads bowed towards them. Several scents filled the camp, a mix of all the clans. That's when Kestrelfur noticed there were cats from every clan bowing to him. She even saw Falconpaw bowing.

Then with another flash the vision disappeared. Kestrelfur blinked her eyes. She was back in the forest. *What in StarClan was that? What does the vison mean? Should I tell Waspstar?*

Kestrelfur bit her lip. She should tell him; he needed to know what she saw.

She bounded back into camp.

A/N::

What do you think this vision could mean? O-O

The amazing photo above is by Ebonystar015 !

//Edited

» Chapter Twenty-Three «

[image] [image]

"Ow... a little lower... yeah, that's the spot," said Deerspots as Kestrelfur poured mouse-bile on a pesky tick.

Kestrelfur couldn't believe that she was stuck doing an apprentice chore. She was the *deputy*. Waspstar had taken all the apprentices and the younger warriors out on a special training session, which left the senior warriors to patrol and hunt, which left the deputy to pick out the elder's ticks.

Luckily there were currently only two elders, Deerspots and Speckleface, so it shouldn't take too long.

Kestrelfur finally managed to fish out the last tick, hidden under a layer of thick brown fur. Kestrelfur picked at it for a while, rubbing more and more mouse-bile on it, and it finally fell off.

"That feels so much better," said Deerspots with a sigh of relief. Kestrelfur flicked an ear as a response, unable to speak with the mouse bile in her mouth, then turned to Speckleface, Briarwing's mother.

"Don't bother," she said. "There's no use wasting time on me. There's no point to wasting time on anyone; we'll all just die one day."

Speckleface narrowed her eyes. "Like your father. He met a tragic end. He and Morningleaf, along with a few others, went on a hunting patrol. He accidentally crossed the BrookClan border going after something... a thrush, I think. A BrookClan patrol ran into them and tensions immediately sparked. Darkpatch taunted them, particularly one fat tom, probably thinking he was funny. However, the tom didn't think it was so funny. Engulfed in too much rage to think clearly, that tom launched himself at Darkpatch and he was killed right in front of Morningleaf's eyes."

Speckleface's eyes narrowed to slits. "Everyone. Dies." she spat.

Kestrelfur was surprised by the intensity of the elder. *Though it was the BrookClan tom's fault. He was too sensitive.*

"Don't worry about her," said Deerspots. "She may look scary, but she'd never lay a claw on anyone."

Speckleface scowled at him. "I'd never lay a claw on anyone except for Briarwing's killer. If I ever figured out who that was, they would never see the sun again."

Kestrelfur was about to head out when Speckleface sharply turned to her. "Make wise decisions. Don't be young and foolish, otherwise your end will come sooner." She unsheathed her claws, making Kestrelfur feel uncomfortable. "Just like Galestar. He was leader before Beetlestar. I was just an apprentice when he died. He led a surprise attack on BrookClan for stealing prey. He fought hard, but BrookClan fought back. One furious warrior dealt him a hard blow, taking out his remaining five lives all at once."

Kestrelfur's eyes widened. "How can a leader lose multiple lives at once?"

"The blow must be deadly," said Speckleface, putting her claws back into sheathes.

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A quarter moon passed, and the weather was turning colder with leaf-bare around the corner.

In that time Kestrelfur had received two more visions, each identical to the first one she had. She had told Waspstar after each one, but he didn't seem to care. In fact, he even seemed upset that Kestrelfur had a doubt in him and reassured her nothing bad would happen.

"I'm doing whatever I can do to make CloudClan better," he had said, swishing his tail. "I would never betray the clan... or you."

Kestrelfur wondered why she had these terrible visions; weren't futures supposed to be bright? She remembered the one she had so long ago, back when she was an apprentice. Her kits playing

happily and Waspstar smiling at her. That was the vision she wanted to come true, not the one with fear in the air and bones on the ground.

Kestrelfur drowned her thoughts as she ate a magpie. Surely she would have her kits soon.

Right as she had the thought, a shriek erupted from the nursery and another queen, Frostfire, sprinted out of the nursery. "Morningleaf's kitting!" she called.

The sound of scrambling came from the nursery. "I'm coming!" yelled Cherrynose. Vixenpaw rushed out of the den and paced in a circle for a second, muttering herbs under her breath.

Kestrelfur got to her paws, feeling excitement boil as she thought about having siblings. The only thing she disliked was that they would be related to Crookedtail, but they would still be her siblings no matter what.

After hearing this, Crookedtail immediately dropped the sparrow he was eating and scrambled to the nursery. "Kitting? Now? I need to see her!"

In that same moment Cherrynose bolted out of the medicine den and towards the nursery. "You can't go in there," she hissed. "This is only my second kitting on my own without Milkleaf, so I need peace and quiet to concentrate. Vixenpaw, bring a stick or moss or something Morningleaf can bite into while kitting."

Vixenpaw ran in a circle frantically, then bolted into the forest. Crookedtail swished his twisted tail. "But I *need* to see her!"

Cherrynose huffed. "You can see her after she's kitted."

Waspstar came out from his den and looked around calmly. "What's happening?"

"Morningleaf's kitting," said Nightblaze, padding up beside her leader. Her golden eyes looked pleased.

Waspstar smiled. "Good. We could use some new additions to the

clan, since we currently only have two warrior apprentices."

Crookedtail cast a glance at his other daughter, Nightblaze, though Kestrelfur couldn't read his expression.

Time seemed to strecth on forever as Kestrelfur waited for her mother to finish kitting. The hairs on her pelt rose every time she heard a shriek. Even though things have gotten rough between her and her mother, she didn't like hearing her in pain.

At last, once the moon had risen, Vixenpaw finally came out of the nursery and announced the kitting was over. Crookedtail immediately shoved his way in, Kestrelfur following.

Morningleaf was sprawled out on a moss nest, looking exhausted. Underneath her two kits squirmed, suckling milk. One had fluffy black fur, like Crookedtail. The other had a dappled color of brown, more like Morningleaf.

"They are the most adorable rascals ever," said Crookedtail with a purr. Morningleaf twitched a whisker as a reply.

"Have you decided on their names?" asked Kestrelfur, feeling excited.

Morningleaf shook her head slightly.

"Let's each name one," said Crookedtail, right after Kestrelfur finished talking. "I'll name the one that looks more like me and you can name the one that looks more like you. I have always wanted to name a kit Pikekit, so that's the name I choose."

After hearing his new name, Pikekit snuggled closer to his mother.

Morningleaf let out a heavy breath. "I had been thinking about names... and I want the she-cat's name to be Chestnutkit."

Chestnutkit shoved her brother aside to get a better suckling spot. Pikekit tried to push his way back up.

"So Chestnutkit and Pikekit," said Cherrynose, sounding pleased.

Crookedtail nodded, smiling.

Kestrelfur suddenly felt a burst of love, one she had only felt while gazing at her kits in a vision. This was what it meant to be a mother.

She suddenly knew she would do whatever it took to protect her unborn kits.

A/N::

Thank you so much for reading this far! Also, what do you think of Morningleaf's new kits and Kestrelfur's half-siblings? I am personally in love with them. Don't forget to comment and vote, thanks so much!

I also made these photos for the kits. I don't own the images and I had a hard time finding pictures of kittens without humans in the photos, so they're kind of blurry.

//Edited

» Chapter Twenty-Four «

Half a moon had passed since the birth of Morningleaf's kits. They had opened their eyes, but each were still kit-blue. They had begun to grasp simple words, like *hello, mommy,* and *hungry*. Pikekit had even figured out *I'm hungry*.

Kestrelfur blinked as light hit her eyes. She padded over to Waspstar, who was assigning patrols.

"Kestrelfur, I was looking for you," he said. He blinked warmly and gave her a gentle lick. "Could you get Thistleleap from the BrookClan border? Bring him here, to the camp."

Kestrelfur nodded, not bothering to ask why. She exited through the dirtplace tunnnel, traversing through the territory. She knew she was close when the stench of fish hit her nose, making her feel like gagging. She finally saw his gray fur and blazing amber eyes.

"What do you want?" he said in an unfriendly voice. He turned a piece of a slightly rotted mouse in his paws.

"Waspstar wants you," said Kestrelfur. "He just told me to come get you."

Thistleleap lashed his tail. "Of course. I've been ignored by both Brightwhisker and my only son, and out of nowhere he wants to see me?"

Kestrelfur flicked an ear. "Are you coming or not?"

Thistleleap let out a low growl. "Fine, I'm coming."

Kestrelfur led him back to the camp, curious to see what Waspstar was going to do. He hadn't talked about his father in a while. Perhaps he was going to kick him off the territory, as he wanted to do while he was deputy. Or maybe he was going to invite him into camp. There was no telling.

When they entered camp, Brightwhisker immediately rushed up to him. "I'm sorry I couldn't see you. I was so busy training and hunting I never had the chance to stop by!"

Thistleleap's tail swished. "So you seriously never had the chance to stop by?"

Brightwhisker looked slightly crestfallen at his harsh tone. "No! I'm being honest!"

Beechwhisker padded up and led Thistleleap to the center of camp, beside the two elders, Deerspots and Speckleface.

Waspstar was perched on Grand Rock, gazing down at his father with intense amber eyes. The clan had formed a circle around the rock. Deerspots, Speckleface, and Thistleleap were in the center.

Kestrelfur realized that as the deputy she should be next to Waspstar on Grand Rock, so she pushed her way through the crowd and climbed up next to Waspstar. He seemed tense as though waiting for someone to leap onto him. He stared at his father for several heartbeats before taking a deep breath as though starting a speech.

"Remember that whatever I do is for the good of the clan. I would never do anything to weaken the clan. My dream has always been to make CloudClan stronger, and that is what I'll do."

The three newest warriors stepped forward. Excitement gleamed in all of their eyes—especially Sparrowclaw's. He even looked hungry. Kestrelfur felt her fur bristle. *Wait a mintue—does he mean what I think he means? No, surely not. He wouldn't. Expecially not to his own father.*

Waspstar turned to the elders. "The elders have no use to the clan. They can't hunt or fight and they're just another mouth to feed. Apprentices have to waste time getting rid of their ticks because they can't do it themselves, and they waste valuable training time in the process. The elders are no good to the clan, so I must eliminate them."

A few shocked gasps ran through the clan, though not as many as Kestrelfur had expected. *Perhaps they just think he's going to kick them out, and maybe that's all he plans on doing,* thought Kestrelfur. *But something tells me he means something a little more extreme....*

Sparrowclaw was the first to step forward, followed by Nightblaze and Chervilfang. Sparrowclaw had his claws unsheathed and digging into the ground.

"Why are you doing this?" asked Duskleap, stepping forward. "All the clans have had elders for many moons and it's part of clan life to take care of them."

Waspstar sharply turned to Duskleap. "They serve no purpose. As I have just said, whatever I do is for the good of the clan. You must trust me."

He turned back to the youngest warriors. "Do it," said Waspstar, his voice catching on the words.

"No!" said Deerspots. "We'd be rogues if we killed off one another just so we can be stronger. CloudClan has always been one of—if not *the* strongest clan. Why must we kill to get stronger?"

Kestrelfur shivered. For some reason, the elders words sent a cold, piercing claw to her heart. *He's right. Why is Waspstar doing this?*

Speckleface dipped her head in defeat. "Just go ahead and do it. The sooner you do, the sooner I can be with Briarwing."

Sparrowclaw's eyes gleamed as he swiped his claws through Speckleface's neck in one clean motion.

Kestrelfur wanted to look away, but she couldn't. She watched as the elder crumbled to the ground silently, light draining from her eyes. Blood welled from her neck, pouring onto the ground.

"How could you?!" someone screeched. Violetheart raced forward, her fur bristling and her eyes filled wih rage. "Speckleface was a strong and skilled warrior and after serving the clan for so many moons. She deserved to spend her last moons in peace!"

Waspstar narrowed his eyes. "Elders. Are. Useless. They weaken the clan." However, the words didn't come out as strong as they had before. They almost sounded like a question.

Rainfoot stepped up beside his mate, fear glittering in his blue eyes. He whispered something into her ear, and she stalked back into the crowd, fur still bristling.

Waspstar turned to the clan. "Anyone else want to argue?"

There was a large number who looked too scared to argue, another large number who looked angry but didn't protest, and a few younger warriors who looked pleased. Only Lionwing, one of the newer warriors, stepped forward.

"Are we really going to stand by and let this happen?" she snarled, her gaze sweeping the clan. "Are you all serious?"

Her brother, Cedarpath, stepped up next to her, showing his support. However, Chervilfang padded towards them with claws unsheath and raked them both along the shoulders. Cherrynose rushed forward to help them, shooting a heated look at Chervilfang, but didn't protest.

Waspstar narrowed his eyes on Deerspots and flicked his tail. Sparrowclaw stepped forward and took a swipe at the elder, but Deerspots dodged in a surprisingly graceful way. "I'm not going down without a fight."

Waspstar's shoulders tensed. "So be it."

Nightblaze was the next to take a swipe at the elder, her claws slashing his shoulder. The elder grunted in pain. Sparrowclaw pounced on top of Deerspots and pinned him down, making it impossible to get up. Then Sparrowclaw's claws went right through his throat, twisting it into an odd angle.

Light drained from his eyes faster than a rabbit could run. He wheezed, coughing up blood. Then his body stilled, making him look as though he had been dead for days.

Horror shot through Kestrelfur. She couldn't even look at

Waspstar. She just squeezed her eyes shut, hoping that when they opened again all this would be over.

She opened them again when she felt Waspstar leap down from Grand Rock. He began stalking towards his father; Thistleleap immediately turned and bolted towards the camp exit, but a group of warriors, including Cindertooth, blocked his path. A hungry light gleamed in their eyes as though they were excited to see his death.

Sparrowclaw and Chervilfang stepped towards Thistleleap, claws unsheathed.

"Wait," said Waspstar, a note of hesitancy in his voice. At least, Kestrelfur hoped there was. "I want to be the one."

They both nodded and stepped back; Waspstar walked towards his father. He kept surging forward until Waspstar's face was so close to his father's they could smell each other's breath.

"What are you doing?" Thistleleap snarled. "Do you think you can bully cats around? Do you think you are so powerful now that you're clan leader?" Thistleleap swiped his tongue over his mouth. "Well you're not. You're just a young warrior pretending to lead a clan. You're just acting tough when you're really not. You're just a mouse-brained idiot."

Waspstar's eyes went cold, his pupils thinning like shards of ice. "You're wrong. I'm the leader who will bring glory and justice to all the clans. I will make sure that no code is broken and that everyone has their chance. You broke the code long ago. You're an outlaw. You don't deserve to be able to take our prey. You disgust me, Father."

A faint growl could be heard from Thistleleap. "I am not your father. You are no son of mine."

Fast as a serpent, Waspstar's claws shot up and sliced through his throat.

Three deaths in one day, thought Kestrelfur, shaking. *This shouldn't be happening! The world should be happy without death. Why in StarClan*

is this happening?

A/N: :

What do you think of Waspstar now? Do you think he's still super charming, or that he's a psychopath? I think he's a bit of a psychopath ;)

I'm super happy that it's spring break, so now I'll have plenty of time to add more chapters :)

//Edited

» Chapter Twenty-Five «

Bones....

Kestrelfur was reminded of her vision when Waspstar refused to bury the bodies and wanted to keep them in a pile at the center of camp. Kestrelfur—and pretty much everyone else—had a hard time ignoring those lifeless bodies.

Brightwhisker was crouched by the body of Thistleleap. She had not stopped sobbing since his death. When someone offered her a piece of fresh-kill, she refused to eat it.

When Kestrelfur walked into the nursery to see Pikekit and Chestnutkit, Morningleaf was shaking as though haunted. Pikekit and Chestnutkit had curious looks on their faces that they couldn't seem to put into words.

"She's sad," said Kestrelfur, saying the words slowly so that the kits would understand. Pikekit actually nodded, understanding lighting his gaze. Chestnutkit, however, still looked confused.

"Darkpatch," said Morningleaf, her voice shaking. "I remember seeing claws cutting swiftly through his throat. BrookClan paws had killed him, and BrookClan paws killed the elders."

Kestrelfur wasn't sure how to reply to that, so she stepped out of the nursery. She wanted to talk to Waspstar, but she hadn't seen him since he had ordered the bodies to be placed in a pile at the center of camp.

Right as she had the thought, Waspstar appeared from underneath Grand Rock, Nightblaze following him. Waspstar immediately started heading towards her, and Kestrelfur tried to think of how to react to this.

"I want to speak to you," he said, making Kestrelfur relieved that she didn't have to be the one to speak first. Waspstar turned to

Nightblaze. "I'll speak to her alone. Watch the camp."

Nightblaze dipped her head and padded away.

"Let's go to the tunnels we found when we were apprentices," said Waspstar. At first Kestrelfur wasn't sure what he was talking about, then she faintly remembered falling into the winding tunnels and declaring them their official hiding space. "Okay."

Waspstar seemed to have a good memory of how to get there, leading her through the forest and towards the GladeClan side of the territory. He turned to a bush and parted some of the branches, revealing the tunnel. Kestrelfur slid in first, Waspstar following her.

She could not smell anything except for dust. She tasted the air and also picked up the faint scent of rabbit droppings. Mud and dust squished benath her paws.

"What I did was for the good of the clan," said Waspstar, his eyes round and sincere. "We both know the elders have no purpose and that my d—Thistleleap was stealing the prey. They're better gone."

Kestrelfur couldn't respond. She still couldn't believe it. Both elders had seemed full of life at the beginning of the moon, each with personalities. Now they were gone.

As though sensing her discomfort, Waspstar gently placed his tail on her shoulders. "I really didn't want to kill them. After each death I've faced I've been feeling more and more sick. But in order to make CloudClan strong we'll have to do some things we don't want to."

"But why?" Kestrelfur blurted out by mistake. "I mean, why can't we just have fun and relax?"

Waspstar faintly smiled—or maybe he was just pursing his lips; it was hard to tell in the dark tunnel. "Because we're special. StarClan knows our destiny is to make the clans great together. We must stand above the other cats."

Kestrelfur nodded. She felt better now, knowing Waspstar was also uncomfortable but doing what was best for the clan nevertheless. She licked his cheek as they intwined tails.

Waspstar shifted his paws awkwardly. "I... have to tell you something."

"What?" asked Kestrelfur, her fur bristling. It was clearly going to be something huge.

"Well," began Waspstar. "That sign StarClan sent saying that I should become deputy—the wasp with a fang on it—that was actually me."

Kestrelfur tilted her head. "What do you mean?"

"I made it," said Waspstar. "StarClan didn't send any sign. That was all me. I took the bodies of the MarshClan cats I killed and pulled off two of their fangs to make the two signs."

Kestrelfur felt cold but didn't pull away as most cats would. "But the first sign. How did you get the wasp to stick to the fang without impaling it like the second sign?"

"I used tree sap," said Waspstar. "I couldn't remember where I had found the tree sap for the second one, so I just impaled the wasp."

"Hmm," said Kestrelfur, not sure what to think.

Waspstar pressed his muzzle to her's, and she felt a purr vibrating from her chest. Whatever doubt she had about Waspstar banished at that moment. They stood there with their muzzles connected for many, many heartbeats before breaking apart.

"Let's go back," said Kestrelfur. "I'm starving."

"Really?" said Waspstar, forming a small grin. "You just ate not that long ago. Well, alright. We can go back to camp."

Kestrelfur grinned. "Race you!"

A/N::

This chapter was pretty short compared to some of the previous chapters. So what do you think? Do you forgive Waspstar? Yeah, probably not. Kestrelfur doesn't either, she's just trying to ignore it.

//Edited

» Chapter Twenty-Six «

"Leafbare has already started out hard," said Waspstar, starting the clan meeting. "And my wish is for all the clans to work together on this."

Some warriors nodded, though others frowned. Waspstar had called together a meeting for all the senior warriors to discuss what they were going to do now that leafbare had started.

"Do you ever wonder why there are four clans?" asked Waspstar. "Why can't all four clans work together? There'd be more prey, territory, and we wouldn't have to worry about fighting each other."

Cindertooth snorted. "The clans would never work together."

Waspstar ignored him. "Think of how strong we'd be if we were just one clan. No one would dare intrude on the territory and we'd get stuff done faster, like hunting and patrols. With such a vast territory we'd never go hungry." He spoke so strongly and calmly that you might think he had practiced these lines over and over again.

"He's right, why can't we just be one clan?" said Kestrelfur. While she hasn't agreed with most of his recent actions, and still had a hard time talking to him, she did support this and wanted to show it. "If we were just one clan there'd be peace and we'd have more time to have fun than worrying about battles and border disputes."

"But the clans have been separated for a long time," said Duskleap, sounding uncertain. "They'd never agree to come together as one clan."

Waspstar shrugged, but he still seemed excited. "Then we'll start off with just one clan. After seeing that one clan had joined the others might join too, and then there'll be peace."

Waspstar scanned the crowd as though expecting murmurs of agreement, but he instead got doubtful looks.

Barely anyone has had the guts to speak put against Waspstar after he killed the elders and his father. Violetheart and Lionwing could, but they weren't at the meeting. Cindertooth was the only cat present who could. "That's mouse-brained. The clans would never be able to work together, much less become one clan."

Waspstar glared at him and slid his claws out. He gave Cindertooth such a withering look that even Kestrelfur was chilled by it. Cindertooth's gaze drifted over to Sparrowclaw, who was standing not too far away and unsheathed his claws. Cindertooth then, hesitantly, dipped his head and clamped his mouth shut. Kestrelfur wondered why everyone was suddenly so obedient to Waspstar.

"We must think about each clan's weakness and use that to convince them to join," said Waspstar. "MarshClan are too stubborn and arrogant; BrookClan are too protective; GladeClan are too trusting. We couldn't get MarshClan and BrookClan to agree right away, but GladeClan might. We'll use GladeClan's trustworthiness to convince the other clans to join. If GladeClan joins, we might be able to get BrookClan and MarshClan to agree."

Kestrelfur nodded. "That sounds like a good plan."

Duskleap shook his head. "But the clans have lived separately for so long. Would StarClan agree with this?"

Waspstar's fur bristled. "StarClan is a group of dead cats. Their time has passed. It's our job to watch over the clans, not theirs'."

Duskleap looked startled but didn't say anything more.

"Just think about all the benefits," Waspstar went on. "We wouldn't have to worry about fighting again. The fresh-kill pile would always be full. There would be peace and unity."

Kestrelfur couldn't think of anything wrong with the plan, so she wasn't sure why some still looked doubtful. With all the clans

working together, wouldn't everything be easier and there'd be more time for fun?

"All together, the clan would be known as FlightClan, to represent the freedom and peace that we'd have," announced Waspstar, his voice ringing throughout the den.

Half of the warriors looked pleased, while the other half still looked doubtful.

"Think about all the peace," said Kestrelfur, trying to convince the rest. "In the past we have lost Briarwing, Darkpatch, and Galestar to a fight with another clan. With everyone working together those lives could've been saved."

Some murmurs filled the hollow. Now most sounded like they were for joining the other clans, with just a small number still dubious.

"Which reminds me," said Cindertooth, stepping forward. "What have you been doing to find Beetlestar's murderer?"

Waspstar tensed. Kestrelfur had forgotten that Waspstar had promised to find Beetlestar's killer after he had died. That was nearly a moon ago and she hadn't heard it brought up since Waspstar became leader.

"I haven't found him yet," said Waspstar slowly. "But when I do find him I'll make sure he's punished."

Why is he so tense? wondered Kestrelfur. *He didn't kill him... did he?*

"Tomorrow Kestrelfur, Grapesplash, Beechwhisker and I will head to the GladeClan camp to convince them to join," said Waspstar. Kestrelfur faintly noticed that he picked the ones who were for joining the other clans, not the ones who were against it.

The few who still disagreed with Waspstar didn't object. The meeting broke up and everyone padded out of Waspstar's den.

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Kestrelfur woke up and found herself in an open field with nothing but tall grass that brushed her nose as she walked. Billions of stars shined brightly above her, glittering like suns.

She knew right away that she was dreaming, and she wondered who might visit her. Last time she was here it was Briarwing, giving her an ominous warning that made no sense. The only difference from last time was that she didn't feel sleepy with vertigo, but instead felt wide awake and full of energy.

"Kestrelfur, wake up," snapped the voice of Briarwing. Confused, Kestrelfur turned around and saw both Beetlestar and Briarwing. Beetlestar's eyes were full of sadness while Briarwing's eyes were blazing with rage. "Why can't you see what's going on right in front of your nose?"

Beetlestar brushed his tail on her shoulders. "Briarwing, you need to calm down."

Briarwing turned to him, her fur bristling and claws digging into the earth. "Calm down? Calm down! That filthy foxheart killed my mother just because elders are weak. Now he's going to take over all the clans!"

"What are you talking about?" asked Kestrelfur, stepping forward.

Beetlestar opened his mouth to answer, but Briarwing shoved her way in front of him and answered instead. "I can't believe how mouse-brained you are. You are a blind fool. Why can't you see that your good-for-nothing mate is trying to rule the forest?"

Kestrelfur tipped her head. "But he's not trying to rule the forest. He just wants to bring peace."

"That's what he says," growled Briarwing. "But you can't trust him."

Beetlestar stepped forward and patted Briarwing with his tail. "Yes. He's done some bad things—things he has kept hidden from you.

"Everything Waspstar does has been planned," said Beetlestar slowly, his voice shaking with sadness. "He plans out all his moves out carefully. He's been planning how he'll rule all the clans since he first opened his eyes."

Kestrelfur shook her head. "So what? I always like planning before I do something. It's not bad that he planned that stuff out. And he doesn't want to rule the clans, he just wants to bring peace." As the words came out of her mouth, she knew they sounded uncertain. She knew that all she was trying to do was convince herself.

"Just tell her!" snarled Briarwing, shoving her way in front of Beetlestar. "The rest of StarClan may want to be mysterious and vague, keeping secrets from the clans. But I don't see the point! We should just be up front from now on."

She turned her blazing eyes to Kestrelfur. "You are a blind fool! You can't see what's happening right in front of you. You're too focused on messing around and having fun that you can't see what's going on in your own clan. You think the world is sunshine and rainbows; you think that all the problems will fix themselves. Well, wake up you piece of mouse-dung!"

Kestrelfur's eyes widened in surprise. Retorts usually came easily to her, flowing right off her tongue like water. But for once she had nothing.

"There's no use to withholding this information," said Briarwing, taking a step closer with hackles raised. "You need to know this. He killed us. Waspstar killed both of us."

A/N: :

I tried to make the fact that he killed them a surprise, but I'm pretty sure everyone has already figured it out 😂

// Edited

» Chapter Twenty-Seven «

Kestrelfur woke with a start, expecting to see Briarwing's dark eyes in her face. But she was back in the warriors' den, laying on her moss nest in the center. Based on how dark it was, the sun had barely risen. Most warriors were still sound asleep, with only a few empty nest.

She could hear voices outside, and she wondered who was awake so early. Then she remembered that she was supposed to go on the early patrol to convince GladeClan to join them and become one clan. After her dream last night, she really didn't want to do that.

She got to her paws and stretched. Then she gave herself a few licks, realizing she hadn't groomed in a while. She waited as long as she could before exiting the den.

"You're late," snarled Sparrowclaw. "What, did you want your beauty rest?"

Waspstar gave the young warrior a glare, which was enough to make him snap his mouth shut. Kestrelfur didn't care if she was the last one here; she just wanted to get it over with.

"Watch the clan while we're gone," said Waspstar to Sparrowclaw. "If we're not back in time, just go ahead and assign patrols. Make sure no one acts up."

Sparrowclaw straightened his shoulders and have a dignified nod. Waspstar looked pleased and signaled them to start moving.

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When they reached the border the sun was in the sky, making it the orange color of dawn.

"The GladeClan dawn patrol should be heading off any moment

now," said Waspstar. "So if we can, let's try to run into them so it won't look like we're intruding on their camp."

Waspstar crossed the stream, making sure to put his paws on the stones that allowed them to safely cross. Beechwhisker followed, Grapesplash behind her. Kestrelfur brought up the rear, wondering when would be a good time to get Waspstar alone so they could talk. She wanted to figure out if he really did kill Beetlestar and Briarwing. She had the sinking suspicion he had, but she wanted to check with him to make sure.

They trekked across the wide, grassy fields. It felt weird to Kestrelfur to be wide in the open without the shelter of trees and bushes.

Close to the camp they ran into the dawn patrol. A sleek tabby black cat growled and unsheathed his claws. "Ugh, CloudClan cats."

The one next to him, a small gray tom, patted him with his tail. "Be nice." He turned to the CloudClan cats. "What do you want?"

"We need to speak to Harestar," said Waspstar warmly.

The gray tom's eyes widened. "Did something happen?"

Waspstar shook his head. "No. We just wish to speak to him."

"Sounds suspicious," growled the black one, his fur bristling. Waspstar did not move or flinch.

"We'll take you to him," said the gray one, stepping in front of the black one as though trying to cover up his rudeness.

"Why are we taking CloudClan cats to camp?" asked a small, ginger she-cat who must've been an apprentice.

"Because they want to speak to Harestar," said the gray one. "My name's Grasstail, and this is Darkrunner—" he gestured to the black tabby cat,"—and Amberpaw." He gestured to the ginger apprentice.

"Nice to meet you," said Waspstar, dipping his head. It was

impossible to read his expression.

The three GladeClan cats led them the rest of they way to their camp. Once they got there they were met with stares, a mix of happiness, anger, and concern. A tall white and gray tom, Harestar, was standing in the center and watched them approach.

The GladeClan camp was nothing like CloudClan's camp. All the dens were burrows dug in the ground and instead of the Grand Rock, they had a giant tree stump. Instead of a dirt ground, the ground was just long grass. There were no dense trees and bushes to form a barrier around the camp. It was just out in the open.

"Why are you here?" asked Harestar, sounding concerned. "Did something happen?"

"They want to speak to you," said Grasstail.

"Though they didn't explain why," added Darkrunner, shooting them a dubious glance.

Harestar blinked at them with curiousity. "Then why are you here?"

Waspstar padded forward. "Leafbare is coming, and based on how leaf-fall went, we can be sure that leafbare will hit twice as hard. You, of all clans, must understand that, living out in the open."

Kestrelfur almost nodded, then decided against it, wondering if Beetlestar and Briarwing were right. Maybe Waspstar was making this up as an excuse to rule all the clans.

Harestar gave a grave nod of understanding.

"And we have lost so much to border disputes and battles against each other," said Waspstar. "In the past we have lost Darkpatch, Galestar, and Briarwing to this. These losses were for nothing. If the clans worked together those lives would be saved."

Harestar's eyes widened. "Are you saying we should become one clan? What did Stormstar and Newtstar think about this?"

"We haven't visited them yet," said Waspstar. "You're the first clan we approached. But think about it. There will be peace between all of us. We wouldn't have to worry about border disputes. We could bring in much more prey with such a vast territory. We could even expand the territory all the way to the Twolegplace. It seems mouse-brained to waste lives on silly border disputes. Why must we be separate?"

Harestar seemed to consider this. Murmurs ran through the clan.

"Yeah, why can't we just be one clan?" asked Grapesplash. "Everything would be so much easier." Beechwhisker nodded.

Kestrelfur wanted to believe it, but she knew Waspstar. He had always dreamed of *ruling* all the clans. He wouldn't just do this to being peace. There was another reason to it, one that wasn't so peaceful.

The GladeClan deputy, Firepelt, murmured something into Harestar's ear.

"We can't do this," said Darkrunner. "We can't trust the other clans. We've always been there for them, but when had they ever been there for us?"

"He's right!" someone else called out.

"But it's mouse-brained to be seperated when we can all work together," another called.

Arguments rang through the clan, making Kestrelfur feel slightly awkward as though she were intruding. Although she found it funny when Grasstail was running over to someone else and tripped and fell on his tail, skidding it through the grass. Blades of wet grass stuck to it, making his tail literally a *grass tail. How ironic.*

At last Harestar raised his tail for silence, which quickly came. "I have my answer."

Kestrelfur leaned in. A part of her hoped that he would say no, but unfortunately the opposite happened.

"I think it's a fantastic idea."

A/N::

Thank you for reading! Please don't forget to leave your thoughts in the comments and to leave a vote on your favorite chapters!

//Edited

» Chapter Twenty-Eight «

Kestrelfur felt sick at Harestar's answer. She really had wished he had just said no. *The rumors are definitely true. GladeClan cats are* way *too trusting.*

Harestar stepped forward. "I have always wondered why the four clans must be divided, why we can't just work together, have peace between us all. I agree with everything that Waspstar has said and I am looking forward to all four clans working together as one."

Kestrelfur's belly clenched. She wanted to say something about this, some sort of warning, but Kestrelfur wasn't sure what she could say. What was she even supposed to warn him about? Hopefully she was overreacting.

"I have wanted this united clan to be FlightClan," said Waspstar. "To represent the peace and freedom between us all."

Harestar nodded. "I think FlightClan sounds like a great name."

Darkrunner shoved his way forward, standing beside his leader. "Harestar, you can't be serious!" he hissed. "You know how CloudClan are. They only care about themselves; they think they are the boss of the other clans. They probably just want to use us to expand their territory."

"I agree with Darkrunner for once," said Firepelt, the deputy. He stood on the other side of Harestar, looking a little anxious. He turned to Waspstar. "Do you really think the clans could come together, after all this time?"

"We just have to convince Stormstar and Newtstar." Waspstar spoke calmly, as though he had planned what words he would use for every question he could be asked. "Once they agree, we will just have to work hard to bring peace. Then, once there is peace between clans, we will never split up again."

Most GladeClan cats looked totally for it, ready to bring peace. There were a small number, however, who were looking at Harestar as though he had gone crazy.

"GladeClan has always stood for peace," said Harestar. "GladeClan has always valued friendships between clans. The first GladeClan leader, Gladestar, had built the clan in hopes that we could help others in need when the other clans wouldn't do it. Our ancestors were against fighting, against prejudice. Our ancestors have always wanted the clans to work together. We are GladeClan, and we are supposed to unite with the other clans."

Hearing this made Kestrelfur feel some sort of guilt, though she had no idea why. If GladeClan was making a big mistake and had the wrong beliefs, that should be their fault.

"Let's make it official," said Waspstar, turning to Harestar. "Let's become one clan."

--

Kestrelfur felt cramped in the muddy burrow, hoping she would never have to sleep in one. Firepelt sat next to her on one side, with Waspstar on the other and Harestar sitting across from her. She could just tell that Waspstar felt cramped and uncomfortable in the burrow too, but he was doing his best not to show it.

Her mouth was watering. Kestrelfur really wanted to hunt, sink her teeth into a juicy peace of prey. Her stomach was growling from hunger.

"We are free to cross each other's territory for any reason," said Waspstar formally, creating the first sanction. "The territory belongs to all of us now, so it doesn't matter if a GladeClan cat is on CloudClan territory or if a CloudClan cat is on GladeClan territory."

Harestar nodded, forming a sweet smile. "Yes. And mating is allowed across clans. Since we are one now, it doesn't matter if a GladeClan cat mates a CloudClan cat. We are all FlightClan now."

We are all FlightClan now. For some reason, those words

made her shiver. She despised the idea of CloudClan becoming like GladeClan. CloudClan was already the best clan and joining with the other clans might ruin that.

Waspstar tensed as Harestar had decreed the previous rule. He was probably thinking of his parents, how they had messed up his life for breaking the warrior code and mating, even though they were from different clans.

"We are allowed to hunt in each other's territory," said Waspstar. "And we are allowed to share fresh-kill with each other."

Firepelt stiffened and his fur bristled. "Did you hear that? They want to steal our prey!" He shuffled away from Kestrelfur and moved closer to Harestar.

"No," said Waspstar. "We are one clan now, so we can't steal each other's prey."

Harestar nodded. "Yes. If we ever want to come together, we must forget that we were ever divided and must come together as one."

The two leaders went back and forth for a while, setting different rules. Kestrelfur zoned out of half of it, unable to think about anything besides food. Her stomach felt sore from being so hungry, and she could hear GladeClan eating fresh-kill. The smell of it wafted into the burrow.

"Warriors, apprentices, and medicine cats are allowed to stay at whatever camp they prefer," said Waspstar, setting the final rule. "However, kits aren't allowed to leave whatever camp they are kitted in. The queen may choose whichever camp she wants to kit in, which is the camp they will stay at until the kits are old enough to become apprentices."

Harestar nodded. "Yes. What about elders?"

Waspstar tensed. He seemed to choose his words carefully. "CloudClan doesn't do elders anymore. We believe they weaken the clan and are a waste of time and energy."

Harestar's eyes widened with shock. Firepelt bristled, claws going in and out of their sheathes. "But older warriors deserve to rest after serving the clan for moons," said Harestar. "They don't weaken the clan, and they tell the kits stories to teach them lessons."

"CloudClan doesn't do elders," said Waspstar. "We will not allow any elders in our camp. If GladeClan wants to keep their elders, they must stay in your camp."

Harestar pursed his lips with displeasure. "Alright. It's a deal."

Firepelt eyed Waspstar and Kestrelfur as though they might jump out and attack. Kestrelfur felt uncomfortable and sick.

"We need to start out slowly so our two clans will learn to trust each other," said Waspstar. "I say we swap deputies, a warrior, and an apprentice so our clans will get used to seeing each other."

It took a moment for Waspstar's words to sink into Kestrelfur. *Swap deputies, a warrior... and an apprentice.* It hit her.

Harestar nodded. "That sounds like a great plan."

Kestrelfur looked at Waspstar, then at Harestar. She could see Firepelt scowling. He clearly didn't agree either.

"I don't want to stay in the GladeClan camp," said Kestrelfur. She didn't want to sleep in the open, it made her feel unprotected. Plus, the GladeClan camp smelled really weird, and she couldn't stand it.

On top of all that, she really needed to speak to Waspstar alone. She also wanted to spend some more time with Pikekit and Chestnutkit.

"But it will help the two clans come together," said Waspstar gently. Kestrelfur's heart fluttered. For a second she forgot that he had murdered Briarwing and Beetlestar to get where he was, that he might be a danger to all the clans. She wanted to curl up next to him. "It might be the only way to get the two clans to come

together."

Harestar nodded an agreement. Firepelt looked just as upset as Kestrelfur.

"Alright," said Kestrelfur. "But I don't like it."

A/N: :

The end is coming closer! We are in the final stretch. I can't say for sure how many chapters will be left, but I say it will end around the range of 32-42 chapters, and then maybe an epilogue, depending how I feel.

What do you think Waspstar will do back at CloudClan, without Kestrelfur? •o•

//**Edited**

» Chapter Twenty-Nine «

Kestrelfur watched as Waspstar, and the rest of the CloudClan patrol, left and started heading back to their territory. She wished she had gotten a chance to talk to Waspstar, but everything happened so fast. Now she was stuck at the GladeClan camp until the Gathering, which wasn't far away, but she still hated GladeClan.

"Feel free to have some fresh-kill," said Harestar, padding up to her. "You can relax for the rest of the day, and if you have any questions feel free to ask."

Kestrelfur was surprised by how nice and welcoming the GladeClan leader was. "Wow. Okay."

She went to the fresh-kill pile. Not surprisingly, over half of it consisted of rabbits. Clearly the GladeClan stereotypes were true.

Her stomach growled and saliva was forming in her mouth as she plucked a thick and juicy rabbit from the pile. She found a spot by other GladeClan warriors who looked close to her age and took a bite. The flavors exploded in her mouth, juice sliding down her throat. It seemed like the best rabbit she had ever had.

She was ready to dive in for another bite when Grapesplash came up beside her. He was the CloudClan warrior Waspstar had picked to stay at the GladeClan camp. His apprentice, Redpaw, stood beside him. She looked anxious, biting her lip and casting glances over her shoulder every few seconds. Since she was Grapesplash's apprentice, it made sense that she was the apprentice chosen to stay.

"Do you want to share?" asked Grapesplash. It took Kestrelfur a moment to figure out he was talking about the rabbit. She heaved another bite down her gullet.

"Sure," said Kestrelfur, pushing the rabbit towards him. Except the rabbit was gone. All that was left were the bones. "Oops. I guess

I ate more than I realized," she said with a laugh.

"That's okay," said Grapesplash. "I'll just get my own and share with Redpaw." Redpaw followed her mentor to the fresh-kil pile.

Strangely enough, Kestrelfur still felt a little hungry. Nothing had been able to substain her in the past few days. But this wasn't her clan, and she didn't want to look like she was stealing prey.

She was about to get up and hunt when the GladeClan medicine cat padded up. She searched her head for his name, but she couldn't think of it.

"I'm Mudcloud," he said, as though reading her thoughts. "Um... I was just wondering if Cherrynose has checked you for pregnancy."

Kestrelfur's eyes widened in surprise. "No, she hasn't. What makes you think I'm pregnant?"

"Well," said Mudcloud, his voice coming out in a rasp, "you clearly eat a lot and your stomach looks a little swollen."

Kestrelfur felt embarrassed that he pointed out her stomach and found herself pulling her tail closer to her belly.

"These are the first few signs of pregnancy," he continued. "But don't worry, you still have at least a moon to go before kitting. Probably a little longer than that."

Kestrelfur nodded, excitement boiling under her pelt. She wished she could tell Waspstar about it, but he wasn't there. Perhaps she could sneak across the border one night and tell him. Then ask about Beetlestar and Briarwing, of course.

--

"Mouse-dung!" she hissed as yet another rabbit escaped from her grasp. It felt so weird hunting in GladeClan, without the shelter of the trees and bushes. Whenever she got close the prey would magically see her and run off, so fast it would be impossible to catch. She also hated how the tall grass brushed her whiskers as she stalked the prey, making it hard to concentrate.

"What, don't CloudClan cats know how to hunt?" sneered a warrior named Badgermask, holding a field mouse smugly in the air.

"I'm one of the best hunters in my clan," retorted Kestrelfur, sticking her tongue out at him.

"Well, that just proves my point," he said with disdain. "Because if you're the best hunter in your clan, but even *you* can't hunt, that must mean your entire clan can't hunt.

Kestrelfur was about to shoot another retort when a tail brushed her flank. She jumped, startled, but she turned to see it was another GladeClan cat.

"Are you Fawnbreeze?" asked Kestrelfur, trying to remember her name.

The she-cat nodded. "Yes. I just wanted to say that you should just ignore him and all the others like him. For a long time GladeClan has been underestimated and they always like to show off to other clans to prove they're better." Her tail moved across her flank, making Kestrelfur feel a little uncomfortable. One thing she had noticed about GladeClan was that they had no respect for personal space.

"I bet we'd be struggling just as much as you if we had to hunt in your territory," added Fawnbreeze. "I've always been curious about CloudClan's hunting style. I heard you stalk in the trees and then leap down on prey when they're not suspecting it."

Kestrelfur shrugged. "We'll do that occasionally, though we usually prefer to hunt on the ground. If we can't find any prey on the ground, then we might try hunting in the trees."

Fawnbreeze's eyes glittered with interest. "That sounds cool." Kestrelfur smiled at the compliment.

"I noticed you were hunting differently than us," said Fawnbreeze. "I guess in CloudClan you have to have a different hunting style since the environment is different. I'll show you how

GladeClan hunts."

She crouched and stalked an imaginary piece of prey. Her crouch looked the same, just a little stiffer than in CloudClan. After she stalked for a little longer, Kestrelfur expected her to leap, but instead she took off running as fast as she could. She looked like a blur in the tall grass, brown against green. She zigzagged through the grass, making sharp turns. Then she hooked her claws on the imaginary prey.

"Whoah," said Kestrelfur. *I haven't even seen Waspstar run that fast before,* she added silently.

"What was different?" asked Fawnbreeze, tilting her head as she padded back to her. She seemed mildly out of breath, but not gasping like Kestrelfur would have been.

"You ran," said Kestrelfur. "In CloudClan we pounce instead."

Fawnbreeze nodded with understanding. "Yeah. I bet it's because you're camouflaged more in the shelter of the trees and bushes so the prey doesn't notice you like it does in GladeClan. But we're in the open, and unless you have a green pelt, you don't blend in. There is nothing to block the breeze either, so if the breeze carries your scent to the prey it will take off before you can say *mouse.* Then it's gone. So we run after the prey, and if we're fast enough we can catch it."

"Sounds like a lot of work," said Kestrelfur, not really wanting to run after the prey. She was terrible at running.

"Well I bet hunting in the trees is a lot of work too," said Fawnbreeze. "Most cats here can't even climb a tree. It sounds hard at first, but once you get the hang of it you'll find that it's easy."

Kestrelfur nodded as Fawnbreeze padded away to continue hunting. Kestrelfur tasted the air and immediately caught the scent of a rabbit. She crouched and stalked in that direction. She remembered how stiff she needed to be if she didn't want to rustle the grass. When she could see it through the blades of grass, digging a hole in the ground, she prepared to pounce out of habit. Then she

bluntly remembered that she was supposed to chase it instead. She took a deep breath and ran.

As soon as she started running the rabbit took off too. It bolted through the tall grass; Kestrelfur tried to catch up. But every second it seemed to get more out of reach, dashing quickly on its small legs. Kestrelfur already felt out of breath, her legs clumsily sliding out from under her. She hoped something would come to block the rabbit's way, a tree hopefully, to help Kestrelfur get closer. But unfortunately this was GladeClan, and there would be nothing but open land for the next tree-length.

She stopped running, knowing she would never catch it. Her breaths came in ragged gasps. She bent over to try to regain her breath.

"Does CloudClan call that fast?" asked Badgermask, coming up beside her.

"In CloudClan we don't have to chase after prey," she said, her voice coming out in a hiss.

Badgermask smiled smugly. "Well, you better get used to it because you're stuck here until the Gathering. Not the best hunter now, are you?"

"Oh, well I bet you would be a great hunter back in CloudClan, where you're surrounded by trees and bushes and branches," said Kestrelfur.

"Well, I bet I could at least catch some prey," he said, picking up his field mouse and padding away.

Kestrelfur dug her claws into the ground, wishing she had some way to reply to that.

She got to her paws, deciding to go back to camp. It wasn't like she was going to catch anything anyways.

But then she noticed something under her paws. A dead rabbit, with a clean slash right through the neck. It was clearly left here on purpose, but who would leave a perfectly good rabbit, and why?

She looked around, but saw no one. Could Badgermask be the one who left it?

She looked around once more, but no one was in sight. She leaned down and picked the rabbit up in her jaws. *Maybe I did catch something after all.*

A/N: :

Who do you think left the rabbit? What do you think about GladeClan? Which do you prefer, CloudClan or GladeClan?

Honestly, I'm not sure. I like both clans almost equally. I like the GladeClan cats better, but I like how in CloudClan they are sheltered and can climb trees. So, I guess I don't have a favorite between those two.

//Edited

» Chapter Thirty «

Kestrelfur came back into camp with the rabbit in her jaws, glad that she wasn't coming back empty pawed. She made sure to give Badgermask—who was scowling—a look as she trotted past.

She set the rabbit down in the fresh-kill pile and wondered what she was supposed to do next. She wasn't sure what you were supposed to do after a hunt in GladeClan.

"Did you catch that rabbit?" asked Harestar, coming up beside her. Kestrelfur jumped; she hadn't seen the GladeClan leader pad over to her. "I didn't mean to scare you." He shot her an apologetic look as though he had given her rotten fresh-kill.

Kestrelfur looked over her shoulder to make sure Badgermask wasn't listening, then turned back to Harestar. "No. I just found it under my paw, already killed, so I brought it back to camp."

Harestar bit his lip. "I hope you don't mind... but I was the one who caught the rabbit. I saw you heading in that direction so I placed it there, hoping you would find it. I didn't want you to feel bad—or look bad."

Kestrelfur's gaze flickered to Badgermask for a second. "But why were you hunting? You're the leader."

"I prefer helping my clanmates in patrols," said Harestar, licking his paw. "It doesn't feel right to watch them do it while I sit at camp doing nothing."

Kestrelfur nodded, though she didn't understand why he would do work when he didn't have to. If Kestrelfur were leader, she would sleep in and then go run around in the trees. The only work a clan leader has to do is promote clanmates at ceremonies, punish someone if they messed up, and speak at Gatherings.

--

Kestrelfur had to wake up early the next day to assign patrols, which turned out to be a disaster.

"Um... you're Fawnbreeze, right? Could you go on the dawn patrol?" said Kestrelfur.

"But you already assigned me on a hunting patrol," said Fawnbreeze. "Though I'd rather do the dawn patrol because I was on the hunting patrol yesterday."

"Alright, you're on the dawn patrol," said Kestrelfur. "And... Darkrunner. Go on the hunting patrol; take your apprentice with you."

Darkrunner *mrrowed* with laughter and amusement. "I don't have an apprentice, *featherbrain*."

"Oh. Then who has an apprentice?"

Someone raised her tail, with a cat nearly her size standing next to her.

"Alright, you go on the dawn patrol instead of Darkrunner," said Kestrelfur, wondering if that was enough for the patrol.

"Me?" asked the she-cat.

"Yes," said Kestrelfur, exasperated.

"But you just told me I was supposed to go on the *hunting* patrol," said Darkrunner.

"Yes, and I changed my mind," said Kestrelfur, starting to feel stressed.

"But you told Flowertail to go on the *dawn* patrol in my place," said Darkrunner. "So which is she going on, the dawn patrol or the hunting patrol?" He spat the last words out harshly, as though it were meant as an insult. He tilted his head to the side, waiting to see how she would handle this.

"The hunting patrol," said Kestrelfur. "Now can you lead it and get

started so I can see who's left?" She directed her attention to the one she assigned to it earlier.

"Me? Lead it?" asked the she-cat, supposedly the one named Flowertail.

"Yes," said Kestrelfur, almost hissing.

"But it's only me and Birchpaw," she said. "We're the only ones you assigned to the patrol."

Kestrelfur nearly cursed under her breath. This was going nowhere.

Harestar came out of the leader's den, looking surprised to see the racket."What happened?" he asked, padding up beside her.

"She's miserably failing at assigning patrols," announced Badgermask, shooting her a smug look. Kestrelfur stuck her tongue out at him.

"Oh," said Harestar, resting his tail on her shoulders—from which she had learned is a comforting sign in GladeClan. "I bet it's hard to assign patrols to cats you've never seen before. That's alright; I'll take care of the patrols. You can sleep in if you like."

Kestrelfur gladly obliged, thrilled at the thought of sleeping in.

--

"Today we will do running drills," said their trainer, Echoshine. He turned to Kestrelfur. "Do you do these in CloudClan?"

Kestrelfur shook her head. She didn't like the word *running* in what he said. "No. We do *climbing* drills, as in tree climbing, but not running drills. And usually it's an apprentice thing," she added. She looked around at the other cats. Everyone was a warrior; no apprentices.

"Well," said Echoshine, "here in GladeClan we must make sure we're always able to run at top speed in order to hunt, so we must practice running. I bet it's like your climbing drills in CloudClan,

but running instead of tree climbing."

Kestrelfur sighed. She was going to fail. She had already made a fool of herself at hunting and assigning patrols, and now she had something else to look dumb at.

As if reading her mind, Badgermask shouted, "Does Kestrelfur really need to practice this? I mean, we all know she's going to fail, just like she's done with everything else."

Kestrelfur gave Badgermask a death glare, to which he returned blankly. She couldn't tell if he was hiding his emotions for some reason or if he was actually spooked by her glare.

Echoshine ignored Bagermask's comment, though he had clearly heard it. "For this exercise we will just do a simple run. Go as fast as you can from these red flowers to those blue flowers." He gestured over to a field of blue flowers. From where Kestrelfur was standing it looked far.

"Let's send off two at a time," he said. "Let's do Tallfire and Moorfoot."

The two warriors lined up side by side in the field of red flowers, keeping their eyes at the end where the blue flowers were.

"Get ready. Go!" Echoshine announced.

The two warriors took off so fast they looked like a blur against the green grass. The flowers waved as they went by and whatever prey was in their path scampered away. Kestrelfur was amazed by their speed; they were even faster than Waspstar.

I'm slow in CloudClan, and these cats are much faster than any cat in CloudClan, thought Kestrelfur. *I'm going to look as though I've never ran in my life.*

The warrior named Tallfire pulled slightly ahead of Moorfoot, heading straight for the blue flowers, which were getting closer by the second. It seemed inevitable that he was going to win when Moorfoot started pumping his legs even faster, shooting past Tallfire and running through the blue flowers.

Kestrelfur half-expected Echoshine to go over to them and give them a huge congratulations, but all he said was, "You two went very fast."

He looked around the group of cats as though picking the next pair. "Next will be Kestrelfur and Badgermask."

Kestrelfur curled her lip with displeasure. "Can I go with someone else?"

Echoshine gave her a surprisingly harsh stare. "No. You will race with him."

Badgermask grinned at her; Kestrelfur went over and cuffed him on the ear before lining up next to him in the red flowers.

"Don't bother trying," he whispered. "I've seen you chase after prey."

"Well, if you ever do a climbing drill, make sure I'm there to watch and tease you," said Kestrelfur, batting him with her tail.

Badgermask searched her face. "The last cat who talked like this to me liked me."

Kestrelfur blinked in surprise at him, the air draining from her lungs.

"Get ready. Go!" said Echoshine.

Kestrelfur hesitated for a moment before taking off. Badgermask immediately took the lead, speeding past her. With every moment he got farther and farther ahead. Kestrelfur tried to spread her legs out to cover more distance like most of the GladeClan cats did, but it still wasn't enough to catch up to him. She still felt clumsy on her paws, and it wasn't long before she felt like she couldn't take in as much air as she needed to.

Badgermask was nearing the blue flowers when Kestrelfur was still a fox-length away. He had almost set his paw down in them when he fell and collapsed in the red flowers. Kestrelfur used that moment to take the lead, passing him and setting paw in the blue

flowers first.

Kestrelfur smugly looked at him as he came over to where she was standing. "We both know that if I hadn't tripped I would've won," he said.

"Maybe. But I still won," she said, relishing the moment where she actually won a race, against a *GladeClan* cat no less.

--

Kestrelfur was in a good mood as she trekked across the GladeClan border next to the other CloudClan cats, Grapesplash and Redpaw. She was happy because that night would be the Gathering, when she'd finally go back to CloudClan and be able to tell Waspstar the news about her being pregnant.

She and the other CloudClan cats were on a dawn patrol, led by Furzeclaw. She was leading them to the CloudClan border.

Kestrelfur gazed across, sparks lighting inside her. She would be able to go there tonight. She looked at the trees and bushes, casting a shadow on the territory. She could see a squirrel chewing on a nut, and Kestrelfur yearned to go over there and catch it. Hunting in CloudClan would be much easier than hunting in GladeClan, where she wouldn't have to chase after the prey.

Furzeclaw looked across the border to make sure everything was good, then started walking towards the BrookClan border.

"What about the scent markers?" asked Kestrelfur.

"I'm surprised you didn't know," he said. "We don't do them with our borders anymore because we are now one clan. There is no use to dividing territories."

"Oh yeah, I knew that," said Kestrelfur awkwardly.

A splash in the river turned the patrol's attention towards the border. Lightwatcher was wading through the river as though she hadn't seen the stepping stones.

"What is it?" asked Grapesplash, immediately recognizing his littermate.

"I have some news for Harestar," she said, her golden pelt drenched from wading through the water.

The patrol led her back to camp and showed her to Harestar.

"What is it?" asked Harestar, a mix of curiosity and fear.

"It's F-Firepelt," Lightwatcher stammered. "He attempted to murder Waspstar while he was sleeping. He would n-not stop attacking, and Waspstar had no choice but to... k-kill him."

The little warrior was shivering now, as though haunted images were crossing her vision. Grapesplash put his tail on her shoulders like a GladeClan cat.

Kestrelfur felt chilled. She remembered Deerpots, Speckleface, Thistleleap, Briarwing, and Beetlestar. *What really happened? I need to talk to Waspstar!*

A/N: :

Oh dear, what is happening! Also, I'm sorry for the long chapter.

//Edited

» Chapter Thirty-One «

The rest of the day went by in a blur. Kestrelfur could not think of anything else besides talking to Waspstar. She would have snuck across the border if she wouldn't see him tonight.

Everyone else's mind seemed to be on Firepelt. Harestar had not come out of his den once since he had heard the news. Usually he would go on a patrol or do some drills, but that day he didn't do anything. He just sat in his den, only coming out once to grab a piece of fresh-kill.

The moon was starting to rise in the distance, and everyone knew that it was time to go to the Gathering. They crowded around Harestar's den, waiting for him to come out.

Grapesplash stood next to Kestrelfur, his apprentice on his other side.

"Will I be able to go to the Gathering?" asked Redpaw, licking a paw anxiously.

"Yes, we're all going," said Grapesplash. "Tonight we'll be able to go back to CloudClan, thank StarClan. Not that GladeClan isn't nice." He added the last part after receiving a few looks from GladeClan cats.

At last Harestar came out of his den. His pelt was clean, which was surprising considering that he had stayed in his den all day. His shoulders were back as he leaped up onto the giant tree stump—from which Kestrelfur figured out was called Great Stump, much like CloudClan's Grand Rock. Even though he looked like a proud clan leader, there was a sadness in his eyes.

"Cats of GladeClan and CloudClan," Harestar announced. "There is a Gathering tonight, and I have already picked who will represent GladeClan. All the CloudClan cats will go and return back to CloudClan once it's over—which includes Kestrelfur, Grapesplash,

and Redpaw. The cats from GladeClan who will represent us include Mudcloud, Darkrunner, Echoshine, Fawnbreeze, Badgermask, Furzeclaw, Flowertail, Gooseleaf, Birchpaw, and Swiftpaw."

Kestrelfur itched to get going.

"The rest of the cats will just sleep and relax until we get back," said Harestar. "And we'll hopefully be returning with more news about Firepelt." There was a pang of sadness in his voice as he said his former deputy's name.

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Once they had reached the Star Tree CloudClan and BrookClan were already there, MarshClan being the only one absent.

The GladeClan cats filed in and mixed in with the other clans. Grapesplash immediately went over to the CloudClan cats; Redpaw met up with her littermates, Emberpaw and Vixenpaw, and they seemed to talk quickly and excitedly to each other.

Kestrelfur craned her neck and saw Waspstar sitting on one of the giant rocks. She immediately started heading towards him, shoving her way past the cats in her way.

"Hey, Kestrelfur!"

Kestrelfur stopped when Falconpaw jumped in front of her path, an excited gleam in her eyes. The scent of BrookClan filled her nose, and she wrinkled it.

"Guess what!" Falconpaw didn't pause for an answer. "I finally got my warrior name. I'm Falconcry now! It took me a little longer than I anticipated, but it was worth it."

"Good job," said Kestrelfur. And she really meant it. "But I have to talk to Waspstar first. I'll talk to you more later."

Falconcry looked a little crestfallen for a second, then her gaze brightened. "Okay! I'll wait for you in the section behind Newtstar's rock."

Kestrelfur continued moving forward. She had to maneuver between cats and shove her way ahead, but she finally reached the rock he was sitting on.

She sat back on her haunches and then leaped to the top in one powerful jump; Waspstar looked surprised to see her appear on the rock.

"What are you doing here?" he hissed.

"I need to talk to you," said Kestrelfur.

"Well, go away. I'll talk to you later. Now is not the time."

Kestrelfur blinked in surprise. She had not expected this to be the reaction. "But I was just wondering what happened with Firepe—"

"Don't you think I'll explain once the Gathering starts!" he hissed, rounding on her. Then guilt flashed in his eyes and his tone softened. "Don't worry, I'll explain everything. I promise."

"You better," said Kestrelfur, wrinkling her nose at him. If he was going to be rude to her, she would be rude back. She turned around and leaped off the rock, sitting at the bottom like the deputies were supposed to do.

Oh wait! Falconcry wanted me to sit with her. She must've forgotten that I'm deputy. Kestrelfur would have asked Waspstar if she could sit with her, but he didn't seem in the mood to talk to her. *I'll just go ahead. He can't do anything to me.*

Kestrelfur got up and looked for Falconcry. She could tell the Gathering was about to start, so she tried to find her friend quickly. She scanned the sea of cats until her eyes landed on her slick gray pelt. She hurried over to her. Right as she sat down Waspstar stepped forward to begin the Gathering.

"Wow. Look at him. Just taking the lead," said Falconcry.

"Yeah. What a show-off," said Kestrelfur, feeling a little guilty at the words. That's when she realized that Falconcry might not be aware that she was his mate.

"Oh wait! Aren't you deputy? Are you supposed to be sitting by the rock," said Falconcry.

Kestrelfur shrugged. "Yeah. But I don't really want to sit there. I mean, what can Waspstar do?"

Falconcry grinned.

"I have something important to share that all the clans need to hear," said Waspstar, his head sweeping side to side, gazing at all the cats. He seemed bigger to Kestrelfur now, though maybe that was just because he was standing on the giant rock.

"CloudClan and GladeClan have united as one clan known as FlightClan," said Waspstar. "Our goal is to bring peace between all the clans. We should not be divided; why must we be seperate? We would never go hungry, have more land, and be more powerful. Think of all the territory we could have! It's a waste to put our warriors in danger with skirmishes between us. If we were united, we wouldn't have to worry about these skirmishes. We'd be safer and at peace."

Stormstar stepped forward, his eyes full of distrust. "I don't believe anything you say for a second. You just want to be leader of all the clans. I bet you will get rid of us once we join."

Several MarshClan cats yowled their agreement.

"What's Waspstar talking about?" asked Falconcry. "Did you really join with GladeClan?"

The way Falconcry said it made it sound like a bad thing; Kestrelfur wondered if it was. Well, knowing Waspstar, it probably was. "Yes. I had to spend the past few sunrises at GladeClan."

Falconcry's fur bristled. "That sounds minnow-brained! Why would you let Waspstar do that?"

"Would you question your leader?" asked Kestrelfur, her gaze sweeping to her.

"Well, you're the deputy! If I were deputy, I'd—"

She was cut off when Waspstar started speaking again. "I know it's hard to believe. All four clans coming together after being seperate for so long. But there are plenty more advantages than disadvantages."

"Waspstar, this is toad-brained," said Stormstar, hackles raised and fur bristling. "If you're going to keep talking about this pile of dung, we're leaving."

Several MarshClan cats murmured their agreement. They all had an angry look in their eyes, and they were shouting nasty things at CloudClan and GladeClan.

"I agree," said Newtstar. "While it does sound practical, it's not what StarClan would want."

Kestrelfur expected Waspstar to get mad, but he seemed calm, his fur flat and his eyes wide with understanding. He seemed ready to attempt to persuade them again, when Harestar spoke.

"What happened to Firepelt? I need to know."

Waspstar turned to him. The mention of the deputy seemed to melt his mask. His fur bristled and his amber eyes lit with fire. "He tried to murder me in the middle of the night. I simply told him he should calm down and be less suspicious, and he stalked into my den and attacked me! I defended myself, as anyone would, and started fighting back. I told him to stop attacking, but he wouldn't. I knew what I had to do. He was a traitor."

"What are you talking about now?" asked Stormstar. "I'm getting ready to leave, so you better start explaining."

Waspstar turned to Stromstar, giving him a glare, then turned to all the clans. "Here's what will happen. You better make your decisions. Your options are to join FlightClan and live in peace. Everyone will be granted a spot in our ranks. Or you can refuse and face the consequences." He unsheathed his claws and slashed the air, baring his teeth.

Harestar's eyes widened. "No. The clans should have a choice,

and we should respect them. I will not send GladeClan into battle for this."

Waspstar turned his blazing eyes to him. He leaped. He landed on Harestar's rock. Then, fast as a snake, he slid his claws through his neck, sliding them down across his underbelly.

"That's it, we're leaving," said Stormstar, glaring at Waspstar.

"Us too," said Newtstar, leaping dowm from the rock.

Harestar's body convulsed several times. Blood poured out of his wound.

"Why isn't he dead yet?" asked Falconcry, her eyes locked on his body as though she couldn't look away.

"He's losing whatever lives he has left all at once," said Kestrelfur, remembering the story of Galestar.

Waspstar turned to the two departing leaders. "I need an answer by next Gathering. Choose wisely."

A/N: :

Whoah another long chapter! I promise they'll get shorter again.

We're getting to the end. Everything is coming to a close. What do you think will happen?

//Edited

» Chapter Thirty-Two «

[image]

Kestrelfur thought the Gathering was terrible, but that was nothing compared to the horrors that waited for her at camp.

She entered through the dirtplace tunnel and immediately wrinkled her nose—not from the smell of dirt—but the smell of decaying bodies.

There were definitely more bodies than when she had left. *Who else did Waspstar kill? And why?*

Kestrelfur slowly padding into camp, forgetting all the other cats behind her. She searched through the bodies.

Not far from the entrance did she see Firepelt, his paw outstretched towards her, his dead eyes staring at her as though pleading for help. Kestrelfur shivered and turned away.

The next cat she saw was Cindertooth. His dull eyes had an angry look to them. Blood stained his pelt and his claws were still unsheathed, his fur ruffled.

Even though Cindertooth was very annoying, she hated to see him dead. She always wanted him to pay for all the times he annoyed her and Waspstar, but not this way. Death was too harsh.

She took a deep breath and hesitantly turned to the next body. She immediately wished she hadn't; she wished she had just turned away and confronted Waspstar. What she saw was a small white cat with a gray splotch on his forehead and blue eyes that still sparkled even though he was dead.

Rainfoot....

She felt like she had forgotten how to breathe. She blinked several times, hoping his body would disappear, that she would see

his usual, anxious self that was full of life. But no matter how hard she tried, his body wouldn't disappear.

"No," she kept muttering to herself, over and over again. "No. No. No. No."

She took a deep, shaky breath. How could Waspstar kill one of their friends?

And just a few mouse-lengths in front of his body was Violetheart's.

Her blue eyes were wide open with fury, her dark gray and white fur fluffed out. But her body was still; her eyes were unblinking. With such a furious face you'd think she was alive.

But she was dead.

Why? thought Kestrelfur. *Why? Why? Why? Why? Why!*

Even though she had disliked Violetheart for taking Rainfoot from her, she didn't want her dead. She wanted to make her upset and jealous, but dead was way too extreme. *Why did I ever want her to feel bad?* she thought despairingly.

Kestrelfur turned away, hoping to find peace and get some alone time, but all she saw was another heartbreaking body.

Her mother, Morningleaf.

An anguish like no other hit her. Her throat constricted. She couldn't breathe. She couldn't think. All she felt was a crushing despair, wishing she was dreaming. Wishing these bodies would stand up and be filled with life again.

Morningleaf's mouth was open in a silent wail, her eyes squeezed shut. Her legs were spread out like she was trying to run away.

Tears stung her eyes for the first time. *No!*

She felt sparks tingle. Waspstar padded up beside her.

"I'm sorry," he said, his voice gentle and soft. "I couldn't speak to you at the Gathering. I had to let you see this yourself. But I need you to understand that I did this for the good of the clan. Let me explain. All these deaths were for a reason."

He moved forward as though trying to comfort her, but Kestrelfur didn't want to be with him for once. She couldn't speak. She just ran blindly into the woods, out of camp. She pushed her way through the dense trees and bushes that surrounded the camp. She lost a tuft of fur, but she didn't care. She just had to get away.

She just kept running, not paying attention to where she was going. She felt like she was back in GladeClan, where the fields ran on forever. She could just run for miles in a straight line. She could not escape the deaths.

At last she stopped in front of an enormous puddle, and only then she realized it was raining. She looked into her reflection and saw herself. Her light brown mottled fur, sticking straight up in all different angles. But her face wasn't bright and happy as it usually was, or had a smirk on it. It had a deep sadness that she wasn't aware someone could possess.

Her breaths went ragged. Was StarClan turning against her? First getting sent to GladeClan, then the Gathering, and then the deaths.

She stared at the puddle for a long time, not going back to camp until the sun started rising.

A/N: :

This time I gave you a shorter chapter since the last few were so long.

Any thoughts?

I feel really sad now.

The gif was from mattsko.wordpress.com

//Edited

» Chapter Thirty-Three «

Kestrelfur made dirt before padding back into camp. She felt exhausted; she hadn't slept all night. She was sure that she was a mess.

When she padded back into camp, everyone was staring at her. For once, she didn't like the attention. She felt her breaths go shaky again, as though she was losing control of herself. She stared at the ground as she padded through camp, just wanting to get away.

She nearly let out a hiss of annoyance when sparks started tingling, signaling that Waspstar was near. She wasn't ready to talk to him yet.

When she heard paw steps behind her, she whirled around and hissed, "What do you want?"

She blinked in surprise as she realized it wasn't Waspstar. It was Badgermask.

"What are you doing here?" she growled.

"I was told to stay at this camp," he said unflinchingly. "And wow, this place is like a pile of dung. I think sleeping in the dirtplace would be better than this." A small smile was pressing the corners of his lips, though his eyes were sullen, not showing the same humor.

"Just get out of here," said Kestrelfur flatly. "Go run around the forest like a blind kit. I'm sure you're not a good runner in this territory."

Kestrelfur started walking away, but she heard him following her. His whiskers were brushing her tail.

"What!" she hissed again, unsheathing her claws and giving him a hard stare.

Once again, Badgermask didn't flinch. "I don't think I'm the one

running around the forest like a blind kit. In fact, I don't think blind cats can be as blind as you are. Everything just happens right in front of you and you don't even see it."

Kestrelfur's fur bristled. She shoved him away as hard as she could, which was enough to make him stumble. Then she pushed her face against his so that she could smell his terrible breath.

"Just get out of here and get out of my life." Her lip curled in the beginnings of a snarl. She had never felt such rage before. It clouded her vision, pushing all other emotions out.

A depressed look fell into Badgermask's eyes. "Well, I hope you won't be as blind anymore." Then, he clenched his jaw and said, "I've never met anyone so featherbrained... besides myself."

Usually Kestrelfur wouldn't care what he meant, but she couldn't help it. "What in the name of StarClan is that supposed to mean?"

She met him with a challenging stare. He gave in. "I fell in love with a she-cat named Rosebriar. We became mates. I thought we'd have kits together, but we didn't. Her parents and her littermates died in a battle against rogues. She couldn't handle the grief, so she *killed herself."* He spat the words out, his fur bristling. "And I couldn't save her. So we're both featherbrains and we're worth nothing more than hare-dung."

He raced away before she could say anything else. He gathered around Waspstar, ready to be assigned to a patrol. She could see Waspstar craning his neck, scanning the camp. Probably looking for her.

Kestrelfur felt a growl rise in her throat. She wouldn't let Waspstar find her. She wasn't ready to face him.

She padded into the nursery, hoping to find shelter there. "Fox-dung," she hissed loudly once she entered. "Fox-dung, fox-dung, fox-dung."

"Keep it down," hissed the queen, Frostfire. Her tail was wrapped around Morningleaf's kits. "I don't want the kits to pick up vile

language from you."

Kestrelfur snorted but didn't argue. She plopped herself down on the ground.

Seeing Morningleaf's kits reminded her of the despair she should be feeling. Chestnutkit perfectly mirriored Morningleaf in almost every way. She had the same dark brown dappled fur and the same fine tail; the same eye and nose shape. The only difference was how her whiskers would twitch crookedly every now and then. That came from Crookedtail.

Kestrelfur sighed, feeling tired and depressed. Frostfire studied her for a moment as though trying to find something to say.

"Do you want me to tell you how they died?"

Kestrelfur looked up at her and pursed her lips. "Yes. Please."

Frostfire's blue eyes seemed to go distant as she began. "I assume you know how Firepelt died." Kestrelfur nodded. "Okay, then I'll skip him.

"Waspstar asked for Cindertooth, Rainfoot, and Morningleaf to be gathered in the center of camp. Morningleaf asked me to watch her kits while she was out there. Everyone formed a circle around those three.

"Waspstar turned to Cindertooth and said, 'You have always doubted my loyalty to the clan. You have always been causing nothing but trouble, and FlightClan will be better off without you.'"

Frostfire watched Kestrelfur as though waiting for a reaction, but Kestrelfur just sat there, expressionless. Pikekit sat up and blinked his kit-blue eyes at Frostfire as though urging her to continue the story. He had grown to look even more like Crookedtail since Kestrelfur had left, having his thick black pelt and pointed ears.

"No one stepped up to defend Cindertooth," Frostfire continued. "Waspstar's followers, Sparrowclaw, Nightblaze, and Chervilfang padded forward. Cindertooth fought back against them, but it wasn't enough. Cindertooth stood no chance and he was defeated.

"Then came Rainfoot. Waspstar said, 'I'm really sorry, Rainfoot, but when I asked you to be loyal to me, to support me, you refused. You are a danger to the clan.' Then Violetheart stepped up. She said if they were killing Rainfoot they'd have to kill her too. Waspstar didn't care. The three warriors attacked them, but Violetheart was strong and she kept them away from both of their necks. But then... more warriors stepped up. The younger warriors started fighting against them. They were outnumbered and defeated."

Kestrelfur felt sick. "Who were the ones who fought against them?"

"I can't remember exactly who," said Frostfire, "but I know it included Emberpaw, Mousetail, Doveheart, and... Beechwhisker."

Kestrelfur blinked in surprise. "Emberpaw and Beechwhisker killed Rainfoot?" She couldn't believe that sweet and quiet Redpaw's own littermate had the power to kill, or that talkative and friendly Beechwhisker would side with Waspstar.

"Yes," said Frostfire with sadness. "I know for sure that I had seen them fighting."

Kestrelfur looked down at the kits. Would they learn to have unquenchable loyalty to Waspstar too? Would they someday side with the being who killed their own mother?

Chestnutkit leaned forward and pressed her paws against Kestrelfur's snout. She giggled.

"When's Mommy coming back?" asked Pikekit, looking up at Frostfire. She was about to answer, but Kestrelfur cut her off.

"Morningleaf's never coming back," she said, her voice filled with pain. "She's gone... forever."

A/N::

What do you think Kestrelfur will do now? I'd love to hear predictions in the comments!

// Edited

» Chapter Thirty-Four «

Kestrelfur turned away from Pikekit's sad expression, unable to look at it. She turned to Frostfire. "So how did she die?" Her voice came out in a croak.

Frostfire shifted uneasily. In her lap, Chestnutkit was playing with mud.

"Waspstar turned to her," said Frostfire. "He said, 'You don't hunt or fight or heal. You don't do anything useful to the clan. You're just another mouth to feed and take care of.' I was the only one who stepped up and defended her. Waspstar ignored our pleas and Sparrowclaw swiftly killed her."

Kestrelfur's stomach flopped. "I can't see Waspstar being that cold."

Frostfire shook her head. "I'm telling you what I saw. He seemed pretty heartless when he did it."

Pikekit blinked up at Frostfire. "So Mommy's gone?"

Chestnutkit looked up from her pile of mud and turned to Frostfire.

She sighed. "I'm sorry. But she is. But she still loves you with all her heart and she will protect you from StarClan."

Kestrelfur didn't want to hear Frostfire counsel the upset kits. When they got older they wouldn't even remember her, so there would be no pain.

But Kestrelfur could still remember snuggling up against her in the small tree by the dirtplace, and how she always begged her to go outside. Then, after she became an apprentice, they talked less. Kestrelfur had felt bitter for being kept inside the hollow when she was a kit, and now she wished she had been nicer to Morningleaf.

Now she was gone.

Kestrelfur stood up and prepared to exit the nursery. It reminded her too much of the hollow she and Morningleaf stayed in.

"What are you going to do now?" asked Frostfire. When Kestrelfur turned to her, she saw that her gaze was steely. Frostfire wanted her to do something, and Kestrelfur knew what she had to do.

"I'm going to talk to StarClan."

--

Kestrelfur had managed to exit camp without being seen. She had made it across the territory and now she wasn't far from the Moonboulders.

Her paws ached and her eyelids felt heavy. It felt like it took extra effort to open them again after every blink. She hadn't had traveling herbs before she left, not wanting to tell anyone where she was going. But it didn't matter; she didn't feel like eating because of the grief.

The forest opened up like GladeClan's territory, making Kestrelfur feel uncomfortable. She hoped StarClan would speak to her once she got there, otherwise the journey would be for nothing.

She stiffened as a strange and fowl stench flew into her nose. It smelled awful, worse than MarshClan and BrookClan combined. She held her breath and gagged. It was strong, and she felt like she could still smell it. It seemed familiar. It was some kind of predator. *Fox...*

Kestrelfur didn't like it, but she knew she'd have to taste the air to determine if it was close or not. She reluctantly opened her mouth and let the smell in. Her tongue burned at the strong and terrible scent. It seemed close, closer than she would be comfortable with.

She pricked her ears but didn't hear anything. It wasn't within

earshot. That was good. She continued on her journey to the Moonboulders.

Eventually she could see them rising over the horizon. Three huge, sleek stones reaching towards the sky. The stars of Silverpelt weren't out yet, but hopefully StarClan would still be able to talk to her.

When Kestrelfur got closer, she felt ready to collapse from exhaustion. *Just a little closer,* she thought.

She laid down near the stones and pressed her muzzle to them. A chill ran down her spine, making her whole pelt shiver as though she was cold. She closed her eyes and darkness immediately consumed her.

--

Kestrelfur opened her eyes and found that she was in a wide, open field. There was no breeze or trees or bushes.

The stars shined brightly above her, even though she was pretty sure the sun was still setting when she had closed her eyes. *Wait. How did I get here?*

Then she remembered that she had went to visit the Moonboulders to talk to StarClan.

That's when the cats appeared, flickering in front of her. They each appeared, one by one, all different shapes.

Thistleleap, Deerspots, Speckleface. She was chilled when she saw Thistleleap's angered expression; his eyes seemed to tear straight through her.

More cats appeared, some of which she didn't recognize. She saw a white MarshClan tom that seemed familiar. *Was that the one I fought during the MarshClan invasion and Waspstar jumped in and killed?* When she studied the tom more closely, she realized it indeed was him. His tail lashed as though he was angry but his eyes were clear without rage. The other cats next to him were other MarshClan cats whom Waspstar had killed in the invasion.

Kestrelfur looked around at the other cats who were appearing. That's when she realized the connection between all of them. *All of these cats have been killed by Waspstar.*

There were much more than she could have ever imagined. Briarwing, Beetlestar, and Cindertooth's faces appeared. Briarwing's and Cindertooth's were both full of anger, their claws digging into the ground with fierce rage, while Beetlestar's seemed more wistful, as though he felt like everything was his fault.

More cats appeared. Firepelt, Harestar, and a random cat she didn't recognize flickered into view. The random cat had a collar around her neck. *Waspstar killed a kittypet?*

Then Violetheart and Morningleaf came into view. Kestrelfur gazed at her mother, feeling like her heart might burst. Morningleaf gazed at her with sadness, her mouth twisted into a weird shape. *Why is she feeling sad? I should be the one regretting everything!*

Then the last cat flickered into view, looking like a small kit against all the bigger cats. He padded forward and came so close to Kestrelfur that their whiskers were touching.

Kestrelfur felt warm all over, but also felt sick knowing that he was dead. His pelt sparkled like stars, and his eyes shined even brighter than the sun. She didn't know what to say. What she *should* say.

"I'm very sorry to tell you this," said Rainfoot, his blue eyes filled with sadness. He took a deep breath. "But you have to kill him."

A/N::

Any thoughts? OoO What do you think will happen?

Please don't forget to comment and vote!

//Edited

» Chapter Thirty-Five «

"Kill who?" asked Kestrelfur, though she had a sickening feeling she knew who he meant.

"Kill Waspstar!" someone screeched.

"Kill him!" echoed another.

"Kill him! Kill him! Kill him! Kill him!"

All around her chants broke out among the StarClan cats. They were screaming for blood, wanting vengeance on the cat who had killed them.

Kestrelfur looked at Rainfoot. "I can't," she said, her voice breaking.

Rainfoot blinked. "Yes. I wish there was another way too. But this is the destiny that has always been waiting for you."

Kestrelfur felt her heart crack. She thought her destiny was to be Waspstar's deputy and bring peace to CloudClan, having a good time with him and raising kits. But that wasn't their destiny. It was for Waspstar to attempt to take over all the clans and Kestrelfur to stop him.

Rainfoot gazed at her longingly, and then turned around to pad away; to join the other StarClan cats.

"Wait!" said Kestrelfur. Rainfoot turned to look at her.

"All those things I've ever done to you. Anything I've ever said to you... It was because I didn't know how to handle my feelings...."

Rainfoot blinked but didn't seem surprised. "I know."

He padded closer to her and licked her cheek. Kestrelfur felt something more calming, different from the sparks that erupted when Waspstar was near. She felt everything relax.

"Why did Waspstar kill you?" she asked quietly.

"He knew I wasn't loyal to him," he said. "So he asked me to stand by his side and prove my loyalty to him. I said no."

Kestrelfur didn't have to ask what he meant. She knew that Waspstar wanted Rainfoot to kill for him.

"But I think that was only partly the reason he killed me," he said. "I think it was mostly because he felt like I was coming between you two."

Before Kestrelfur could say anything more, Rainfoot started padding away, and everything around her started to fade.

--

Kestrelfur woke up with a jump, pulling back from the Moonboulders. She shivered for a second.

The sun was rising in the sky. It was just starting to set when she had first closed her eyes, which meant she had spent the night by the stones.

Everyone's probably wondering what happened to me. Only Frostfire knows where I went. But Kestrelfur didn't like the thought if going back to camp, where there were dead bodies, darkness, and Waspstar....

She got to her paws. Her muscles were sore and she grunted. Everything ached. She wasn't sure how she'd make it back to camp.

She started her journey, feeling very enervated by the time she was nearing the border. Before she knew what was happening, she turned on her side and vomited.

I hope I'm not sick, she thought weakly. She got up again and started heading towards the border.

After trekking a few more fox-lengths she started feeling better. Her mind cleared up as she caught the scent of CloudClan. She started to feel her usual energy.

Then she heard a loud snarl coming from behind her. An awful scent flew into her nose. She warily turned around and saw a huge fox, with teeth bared and eyes glinting; its hackles were raised and its ears were back, pressed against its skull. Before she could process what was happening, it leaped at her.

Teeth sunk into her back, cutting deep through her flesh. Pain seared down her sides. She let out a wail of agony. She could feel blood dripping down her sides.

Then the fox let go and prepared for another strike. Kestrelfur quickly whirled around and slashed at its snout with unsheathed claws. A small scratch appeared, but she hadn't been close enough to draw blood. The fox snapped at where her paw had been seconds before. She used the distraction to turn around and quickly bolt towards CloudClan.

Her breaths escaped through her mouth. She felt weak and her back hurt. Her legs were sore and she felt *very* tired.

She could see the fox out of the corner of her eye, gaining on her. It pounced on Kestrelfur as though she were prey. She screamed as the fox slashed its claws down her back, drawing more blood.

Spots flashed in front of her gaze, and she knew she needed to fight back.

But maybe StarClan would be a better place to escape. The thought ran through her mind, but she knew she didn't agree. Dying didn't sound terrible, but she wasn't ready to yet. She shifted and kicked up with her hind-legs, slamming them into the fox's underbelly. It would've worked on cats, but the fox was too big. Fast as a serpent, it bent down and sank its teeth into her right leg.

Kestrelfur let out another wail. She had never felt such pain in her life. The fox hung on, tearing through her skin.

"Help!" she cried, hoping someone, a patrol perhaps, would hear and come to her aid. "*Help!*"

No one came right away, so Kestrelfur knew she was on her own for

a little longer. With another attempt, she slashed her claws into the fox's snout, this time cutting deep enough to draw blood. The fox released her leg with a yelp of pain, and Kestrelfur used that moment to bolt away.

"Help!" she cried. She could already hear the fox coming after her again. She tried to run faster, but pain soared through her leg. She was limping.

The fox snapped at her, its teeth just barely missing her pelt. It snapped again, its teeth closing in around her ear.

She wailed a final time. She collapsed. Spots were dancing across her vision and all the sounds were muffled.

Out of the corner of her eye she saw a cat hurl itself at the fox. The fox released Kestrelfur's ear and started attacking the other cat. Then another cat came and joined the fight. Then a third cat started running forward, but this one came to Kestrelfur.

It said something, but she couldn't make out what it was. The slight tingling through her pelt told her that it was Waspstar. He pressed his muzzle to her flank and she felt a surge of strength. She inhaled deeply and suddenly, her breaths going in and out quickly.

"Get up," he said encouragingly. He nudged her.

Kestrelfur shakily got to her paws, pain searing through her head. She gasped as though she couldn't breath.

"It's okay," said Waspstar, licking her cheek. The same cheek Rainfoot had licked. "I was worried sick about you."

Kestrelfur nodded, unable to say anything else. Waspstar guided her, heading back to camp, letting her use him for support.

Kestrelfur nervously looked back.

"They'll be fine," said Waspstar.

But as he finished, Kestrelfur saw her former mentor, Amberheart, go limp and sink to the ground.

A/N::

So what are you guys thinking? Do you think Kestrelfur will kill Waspstar or not?

In case you hadn't noticed yet, I'm a very concise person. I always get right to the point in these author's notes unless I'm having one of my occasional long-winded moments.

//Edited

» Chapter Thirty-Six «

Kestrelfur felt her stomach drop. "Amberheart!" she said. "They need help."

"But *you* also need help," said Waspstar. "You're injured."

Kestrelfur knew he was right, and that objecting would waste energy and time. But she still did it anyway. "I can make it back to camp on my own. I can warn them about the fox. You need to help them, before—" she looked back at the other cat "—Larkmoon falls too."

Waspstar seemed hesitant. "Are you sure you can make it back on your own? I don't want—"

He was interrupted by a loud snarl. They both turned around to see that another fox had appeared. This one was slightly bigger than the first one, and looked even more vicious. With one paw it batted Larkmoon away. Larkmoon's body slammed into a tree, and he crumpled to the ground.

"I'll be fine," snapped Kestrelfur, louder than she meant to. "Now help!"

Waspstar gave a curt nod and turned away, ramming into the first fox and putting a deep gash in its side. Kestrelfur turned away as she saw the second fox biting into his scruff. *Not my problem anymore. I just need to get back to camp.*

She started limping through the forest as fast as she could. Her leg filled with searing pain every time it hit the ground, but she tried to ignore it. Still, she couldn't help but wailing occasionally; there was no use in hiding the pain.

She felt relief when she saw a patrol up ahead. When they saw her, they immediately bounded up to her. "What happened?" asked the leader, Duskleap.

"A fox attacked me," said Kestrelfur, taking a deep breath of air. "Larkmoon, Amberheart, and Waspstar are fighting it right now. Amberheart might be dead, and a second fox arrived just as I was leaving."

She saw widening eyes. "We'll go help them immediately," said Duskleap. "Where was it?"

"By the marker between our territory and the unclaimed territory."

Duskleap nodded and turned to his patrol. "Let's go."

They raced off and Kestrelfur was left alone again, running through the forest as fast as she could. She felt a wave of relief when she saw the dirtplace and the entrance to camp. She ran through the dirtplace, trying to ignore the pang of sadness she felt when glancing at the tree she had spent her kithood in with Morningleaf.

"Foxes!" called Kestrelfur when she entered camp. "There are two foxes!"

This caught everyone's attention. Cats started gathering around her.

"Oh no!" said Cherrynose, sounding tired and defeated as she said the words. "Now I have to restock and prepare to treat everyone. Vixenpaw, can you please grab as many herbs as you can get? And get some cobwebs, too."

The ginger apprentice nodded and bolted out of camp.

"Where are they?" asked Crowpelt. Kestrelfur felt a lump in her throat when looking at Rainfoot's former mentor.

"They were by the scent marker between our territory and the unclaimed territory."

Crowpelt nodded. "All right. I'm going to take Nightblaze, Chervilfang, Grapesplash, Thundercloud, and Crookedtail with me to fight off the foxes. Since Lightwatcher is one of the fastest runners, I want her to run to the other camp to notify Sparrowclaw what's happening."

Kestrelfur felt odd hearing GladeClan be called the 'other camp'. She had forgotten that Sparrowclaw had been sent to GladeClan to supervise the preparations for the upcoming battle.

Crookedtail stepped forward, his curved tail swishing slightly. His eyes were cold and emotionless, as they had been since Morningleaf's death.

The patrol and Lightwatcher set off, and the camp seemed empty with most of the warriors gone. Cherrynose beckoned Kestrelfur to her den with her tail, and she silently followed.

"Great StarClan, that fox got you hard," said Cherrynose.

Kestrelfur felt an itching curiosity to know how she looked. "I want to see myself."

"I'm going to treat you first," said Cherrynose, and she said it in a way that let Kestrelfur know that she wasn't going to take '*no'* for and answer.

She grabbed some herbs off the shelves and started spreading some of them along Kestrelfur's wounds. The smelled filled her nose and she gagged at the awful scent.

"You get used to it," said Cherrynose plainly.

Kestrelfur sighed, though she wasn't sure why. She suddenly felt a massive wave of sadness hit her, threatening to drown her. For a second she thought she could see Morningleaf and Rainfoot flash before her eyes, and the chants *'Kill him, kill him!'* filled her ears.

"Please no," muttered Kestrelfur, squeezing her eyes shut.

"I'm sorry, but I'm going to have to treat your leg now, whether you like it or not," said Cherrynose. Her voice drew Kestrelfur back to reality, and she slowly opened her eyes. She spread her injured leg out carefully, wincing as she did so.

Cherrynose gently touched it with her paw, and Kestrelfur grunted. "This may hurt. I just need to make sure it's not broken."

Kestrelfur didn't reply. Cherrynose started pressing again, her paw sliding down her leg. Kestrelfur squeezed her eyes shut, spots dancing in front of them.

"The good news is it's not broken, the bad news is it's dislocated," said Cherrynose. "I'm going to have to move it back into place, and it may hurt. A lot."

Kestrelfur sighed. "Just do it."

"I'm going to give you some poppy seeds afterwards to help you rest and ease the pain," she said. Without hesitation, she immediately grabbed Kestrelfur's leg and started shoving the bone into place.

Kestrelfur wailed, spots dancing in front of her eyes. The sounds went muffled. She couldn't think. All she felt was pain.

Then she felt a pop in her leg, and the pain cleared.

"How's that?" asked Cherrynose. "Can you move it?"

Kestrelfur didn't want to move it, but she reluctantly did so. She was surprised at how easily she moved. It felt a little sore, but most of the pain was gone. "Wow."

She heard Cherrynose mutter, "Was I supposed to give her poppy seeds before I moved her leg?" as she grabbed some poppy seeds and laid them in front of her. "Now eat these and rest."

Kestrelfur was bending over to lick them up, but then she heard someone call out, "MarshClan is invading!"

Kestrelfur sat up immediately.

"Don't worry about them," snapped Cherrynose. "Just eat the poppy seeds. You're in no condition to fight."

Kestrelfur rolled her eyes and peered out the den. Sure enough, she saw the few warriors they had struggling to fight off the invaders. CloudClan was massively outnumbered.

"I need to help," said Kestrelfur.

"No," said Cherrynose. "You will die if you go out there in your condition."

And maybe dying wouldn't be so bad, thought Kestrelfur as she raced out of the den and leaped into battle.

A/N: :

What do you think will happen next? Predictions? (◎_◎;)

//Edited

» Chapter Thirty-Seven «

[image]

Kestrelfur felt her heart pounding. She had a lump in her throat. The camp really did smell like death from the decaying bodies.

She forced her mind away from the dead and focused on the battle around her. She saw Beechwhisker fending off a MarshClan warrior who seemed twice her size; Badgermask trying his best to keep two MarshClan toms away from his underbelly; Brightwhisker, Waspstar's mother, tussling against a gray warrior; the littermates, Redpaw and Emberpaw, fighting side by side against another MarshClan warrior. Kestrelfur looked around for more warriors until she realized that everyone else had gone to fight the foxes. They were alone.

So there's six of us against an army of MarshClan warriors, thought Kestrelfur. *This day is going great.*

The MarshClan warriors who weren't fighting didn't seem to know what to do, as though they had expected a bigger group of CloudClan to try to stop them. Some were laying down scent markers by Waspstar's den. Others were tearing nests from the warriors den to shreds.

Kestrelfur decided to just choose a cat to go after. She charged at the nearest one, a blue-cream she-cat who was tearing pieces of prey from the fresh-kill pile to shreds so it couldn't be eaten.

Kestrelfur was glad that she had caught her by surprise. The impact of her running into the cream she-cat was enough to knock her down.

Remembering her training as an apprentice, she positioned herself so that the she-cat couldn't get up. The she-cat grunted as she attempted to shove Kestrelfur off, but her attempts were futile.

Then she shoved her hind-leg against Kestrelfur's injured leg.

She let out a yelp as pain engulfed her. Her leg felt numb. The she-cat used that distraction to push Kestrelfur off of her.

The she-cat didn't hesitate. She immediately sliced a clean wound into Kestrelfur's shoulder. She grunted from pain.

Kestrelfur immediately leaped into the air, preparing to perform a trick from her training. The she-cat prepared to strike her, but Kestrelfur turned in mid-air so that the blow only hit her paw instead of her underbelly. Then she landed flat on the MarshClan warrior.

The she-cat writhed beneath her, but she was unable to get up. Kestrelfur felt a flow of satisfaction, until the she-cat stretched a claw out and nicked her injured ear.

Kestrelfur grunted, and the she-cat managed to knock her over and get to her paws. The she-cat came forward and held a paw to Kestrelfur's chest so that she couldn't get up.

Kestrelfur gritted her teeth and tried to shove the paw away, but it held on like a flea.

The she-cat looked ready to srike, but then her eyes widened. Kestrelfur was surprised by the words that came out of her mouth.

"Are you pregnant?"

Kestrelfur was shocked. She nodded.

"I know a pregnant cat when I see one," the she-cat said. "I used to be a medicine cat and I have seen many pregnant queens before."

"Yeah," Kestrelfur croaked, not sure what else to say.

"Perhaps it's just the medicine cat in me, but I can't hurt a pregnant queen," she said. "So, just this once, I'll let you go."

She took her paw off Kestrelfur's chest, and she felt relieved.

Just then all the other cats came into camp. They looked bloody and worn and seemed ready to hit the medicine den, until they

noticed the camp was filled with MarshClan cats.

"What is this?" roared Waspstar's voice.

The fighting stopped. One MarshClan cat, Stormstar, stepped forward. "Let this be a warning, Waspstar. We are much stronger than you think. We would rather die than surrender to your leadership."

Several MarshClan cats yowled their agreement, raising their claws as though trying to add effect.

It was so fast Kestrelfur didn't have time to process it. Waspstar was suddenly slashing claws through Stormstar's neck, sliding them down to his underbelly. Stormstar batted a claw at him weakly, but Waspstar swiftly dodged.

Stormstar collapsed to the ground.

"Retreat!" called one of the MarshClan cats.

They all started to scatter, bolting out of camp as fast as they could, while Stormstar was still on the ground, blood soaking into the dirt below him.

Kestrelfur couldn't watch. She closed her eyes and turned away. *Don't vomit. Don't vomit. Don't vomit.*

She could see the plains of StarClan and all the cats Waspstar had killed gathered around it. Stormstar was about to join that group.

The world seemed to be spinning, even with her eyes closed.

Cats were going to be mourning about Stormstar's death, and Waspstar wasn't going to care. He has killed too many cats to put much thought into a single death.

Kill him. Kill him. The chants rang in her ears.

She felt like she couldn't. She would lose someone else she loved.

Which side of Waspstar should she be looking at right now? The charming, gentle side? The one that was willing to help her back to camp after being attacked by a fox? Or the dark, arrogant side? The one that had taken countless lives and will take countless more?

Then she felt warmth spread through her body. Rainfoot's cool scent flew into her nose. She could feel his muzzle touching hers, feel his spirit like a cold draft of wind. She knew what he wanted her to do.

"I just don't know if I can bear to lose him," she whispered.

"This isn't about you," said Rainfoot gently. "It's about many others. Many lives will be lost at this battle."

Kestrelfur knew it, she just couldn't imagine Waspstar gone. He had helped her during apprentice training, he was looking forward to seeing their kits.

But by the time the kits are born, it will be too late.

Kestrelfur nervously opened her eyes as Rainfoot's presence drifted away. She looked at Waspstar and saw his darker side. Glaring at Stormstar's body with disgust with claws unsheathed and blood soaking his pelt. That was the side she needed to look at as she killed him, not the charming and loving one.

Okay, she thought. *Now would be the time, before I spend more time with him and his death becomes even more painful.*

A/N: :

Hi! Here it goes, Kestrelfur's gonna do it!

Also I finished reading Allegiant of the Divergent series and the ending was so sad! I don't usually cry at books, but I did. That was my first time crying from a book. Ever. Whyyy....

Also the image above is from amyshojai.com

//Edited

» Chapter Thirty-Eight «

Kestrelfur felt a lump in her throat as she padded over to Waspstar. She felt her fur fluffing up, but she forced it to lie flat.

When she had almost reached him Nightblaze stepped in her way. "What are you doing?" Her hackles were raised and her eyes glittered with hostility.

"It's okay," said Waspstar, coming forward. He looked casual, as though he hadn't just killed a clan leader.

Nightblaze dipped her head and stepped back.

Waspstar looked excited at first, but then his face fell and he shuffled his paws awkwardly. "Are you... okay?"

Kestrelfur wasn't sure whether he was referring to Rainfoot and Morningleaf's deaths or the fox attack. "Yeah, I'm doing fine."

There was a moment of awkward silence between them. Kestrelfur felt her heart thumping, not sure what to do. She couldn't kill him now, with everyone watching. *What should I do? What should I do? What should I do?*

"I need to speak privately with you," she said, making up her mind.

"Great," said Waspstar, sounding bright. "Let's go to those tunnels from before!"

They were about to leave, when Cherrynose came up to them. "Oh no you don't!"

"What?" asked Waspstar, turning to face her.

"I need to treat your wounds," said Cherrynose sternly and stubbornly.

"I'll be fine," Waspstar snapped. "I'll get them treated when I get back."

If *you get back,* thought Kestrelfur. She felt like she had a wad of cotton in her throat; it was hard to swallow.

--

They arrived at the entrance to the tunnel. Kestrelfur remembered how she discovered it: she was running and then fell into the hole. She had been so excited, not realizing that one day it would be the location where she'd become a murderer.

Waspstar went in first, and Kestrelfur squeezed in after him. Since they had both grown since their last visit, it was harder to get through the entrance.

When they were fully in the tunnel, it opened up around them so that they had more room. The earth beneath their paws seemed rough and hard, not squishy mud like their last visits. Perhaps things really could change over time.

"Now, what is it?" asked Waspstar with a flick of his ear. His amber eyes seemed to be glowing, and he had a grin on his face that caused sparks to flicker under Kestrelfur's fur. *No, no, no, no.*

She took a deep breath. She had to talk to him first, one last time. She started with, "I'm pregnant."

Waspstar's eyes glowed brighter and his smile widened. "Oh, how wonderful!" he purred. "Let's start thinking of names! You said that in your visions there was a tom named Tigerkit, right? And the others were she-cats. Lets name the she-cats Alderkit and... how 'bout Sagekit?"

Kestrelfur felt something drop in her stomach. "Those are beautiful names."

Waspstar was looking at her intently, and Kestrelfur had to turn away so that he wouldn't notice the tears brewing in her eyes. Unfortunately, Waspstar noticed and asked, "What's wrong?"

Kestrelfur squeezed her eyes shut. She couldn't tell him. "You killed Rainfoot and Morningleaf. How could you?"

She felt Waspstar tense. "I thought Frostfire told you."

"She did!" snapped Kestrelfur, suddenly feeling a surge of anger. "I meant how could you kill Rainfoot, who went through apprentice training with us?"

Waspstar tensed. "I asked him to show loyalty to his clan, and he wouldn't."

"You're lying," whispered Kestrelfur. "I can tell."

"Well... that was only part of it," he said apologetically. "Mostly because I noticed the way you looked at him... like you had a crush on him but couldn't do anything about it. I wanted to help you."

The wad of cotton in her throat dug deep, becoming stronger. She felt like she couldn't think.

"Something else is bugging you," said Waspstar. Kestrelfur clamped her jaw. *Why is he so perceptive today!*

"It just... it feels like everything is ending," she said, the words stuttering out.

"But this is a beginning!" said Waspstar. "We're going to bring peace to the clans and rule them together. We'll be heroes!"

"By killing everyone who is useless?" she asked, looking up at him. Just then she noticed how much bigger he was compared to her. He might as well be a TigerClan warrior.

"It's to make the clans stronger," said Waspstar. "It's our destiny."

"No it's not," mumbled Kestrelfur.

"What?"

She took a shaky breath. She might as well be truthful with him

since this was their last time together. "While I was gone I went to the Moonboulders and StarClan visited me. They said that we aren't destined to rule the clans together. That's not our destiny."

"But it is!" said Waspstar, as though saying it loudly would make it true. "Haven't you always felt it? It is our duty. I've known it since I've opened my eyes."

It's your *duty,* she almost said, but she didn't because she had learned that sometimes it's better to hold your tongue.

Kestrelfur looked down at her paws. "I just... I—I... I don't feel like a belong in Cloud—er, FlightClan anymore."

"Hey..." said Waspstar, surprisingly gentle. "It's gonna be okay. I'll make it okay. I'll get you anything you want."

Kestrelfur didn't respond, feeling the emptiness expand within her, threatening to shatter her heart. She felt Waspstar's tail slowly tangle around hers. Finally, she looked up at him. He had grown so much since they were apprentices. His shoulders had grown broader, his chest higher, his pelt thicker and sleeker. He really would be a terrifying opponent. It's no wonder that he had easily killed two leaders.

Their heads came together, then their muzzles. Kestrelfur felt sparks surging under her fur, and she knew Waspstar felt them too. She breathed in his scent one last time: piney like the woods. She hoped he wouldn't notice how shaky her breaths were or how much it hurt to swallow. She hoped he couldn't see the tears forming in her eyes.

She wanted to stay there, with him, for the rest of her life. But that wouldn't happen. She had a destiny.

But maybe she wouldn't have to kill him. *I'll test him.*

"Waspstar," she said, pulling her muzzle apart from his. "Let's not go to battle. I don't care if we rule all the clans. Let's stop killing cats and let GladeClan return to their own clan. Let's just rule CloudClan only."

"No!" said Waspstar, shaking his head. "We're *supposed* to rule *all* the clans and make them stronger. We're already halfway there! I'm not turning back now."

"Please."

"No!" he said, almost shouting. He began to shake. "Don't you see? It's too late to go back. I've killed far too many cats. I was the kit who knew there was a destiny waiting for him, I would imagine killing all the cats who got in my way, knowing it was for the best. But when I actually went to do all this stuff... it was worse than I thought. But it's too late; I'm not turning back because I *can't* turn back."

She felt a stab of pity for him. She knew what it was like to be a kit, dreaming of a huge destiny awaiting them. Still, it was wrong. What he's done, and what he will do.

It's too late to turn back.

It's never too late to do the right thing.

She pressed her forehead to his, feeling his soft fur. She sniffled. She licked his cheek, and he licked hers in return.

She squeezed her eyes shut. "I love you. Please forgive me."

And then she slid her claws through his throat.

A/N::

... I have nothing to say :'(

//Edited

» Chapter Thirty-Nine «

Kestrelfur could see Waspstar surging towards her. He was absolutely handsome. Almost too handsome to be real. His amber eyes were intense and focused, clear and controlled. His muscles rippled along his body as he walked.

The sparks were tingling within Kestrelfur's fur. When he spoke, his voice was strong and loud. His voice didn't have a trace of doubt, making it seem as though anything he would say would be right.

Handsome.

» Chapter Forty «

But that wasn't the first time Kestrelfur had seen him. She had seen him in her dreams, as strong as ever. Dark tabby stripes across his ginger fur, making him look as strong as a tiger. Eyes focused.

She had known him, but didn't know him. She hadn't known where his arrogance and ambition would lead him... right into death. She hadn't known him well enough to know that he did not have sympathy for anyone but himself.

All sparks have to go out sometime.

» Chapter Forty-One «

Kestrelfur wasn't sure how much time had past when she finally started dragging Waspstar's body back to camp. She had never felt more dulled, so empty inside. The sparks were gone, leaving only emptiness.

She wasn't sure what she would do or say once she got back to camp. She was just going to see what happened.

Somehow, she hadn't cried since exiting the tunnel. Somehow, she was fighting back the tears that were pressing her eyelids.

She didn't feel relief nor fear as she approached the camp entrance. She just felt something widen inside her, leaving a hollow feeling.

As soon as she entered the camp, cats rushed around her, asking her questions. She didn't hear them. She just felt a gnawing emptiness, as though she weren't really there.

Sparrowclaw shoved his way to the front and got in Kestrelfur's face. "What happened?"

Kestrelfur looked up at him, but didn't feel intimidated, despite being much smaller than him. "He died." Her voice had never sounded so weak before.

"We can see that," said Sparrowclaw impatiently. "*How* did he die?"

For a moment Kestrelfur was at a loss for words. "We en-encountered a group of MarshClan cats who were angry after the battle."

Sparrowclaw's lip curled slightly but didn't ask anymore questions.

"Well," began Duskleap, padding forward, "are you going to

appoint a new deputy?"

It took a moment before his words sunk in. "Appoint a..." she trailed off, realizing what he meant.

"You're the leader now."

The hollowness inside Kestrelfur seemed ready to collapse at those words. She started shaking, though she wasn't sure why. "No! I don't want to be leader."

Duskleap remained quiet for a moment. "But it's clan tradition."

Kestrelfur shook her head. Never before in her life had she been so *against* the thought of being clan leader. "No. No. I will not."

Duskleap seemed at a loss for words.

"Are you afraid of being clan leader?" challenged Sparrowclaw.

Kestrelfur shook her head. It wasn't that. It was the guilt. She couldn't be leader after killing her mate. She didn't *want* to be leader anymore anyway. It would make life all the more miserable.

"Perhaps in time you will be able to become leader," said Duskleap gently.

"No," Kestrelfur repeated, not sure why they couldn't understand. "Duskleap, you can be leader if you want. I'm not going to be leader."

Before anyone could object, she turned away and padded out of camp, leaving Waspstar's body behind.

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Kestrelfur lost track of time as she sat in front of a puddle, waiting for the emptiness to go away. It didn't. Grief and guilt were the only emotions she felt.

Her pelt felt too smooth and still. She hadn't realized how she had always been erupting with sparks before. Now they were gone.

She had taken them for granted.

She tried to think everything over—her whole life—but her head was foggy and she didn't get far before tearing up.

Is there a point of living if everyone dies? She didn't shove these thoughts away as she used to do. She just let it hang there. Somehow, holding onto that thought seemed to keep her away from tears, though it made her uncomfortable.

"Kestrelfur!" someone called out.

Kestrelfur dug her claws into the earth, clenching her jaw and taking a shaky breath.

"Are you okay?" asked the voice. It was Beechwhisker.

"I'm fine," she snapped, getting to her paws and turning to her.

Beechwhisker shifted uncomfortably. "Um... are you sure you don't want to be leader? Are you sure you're just going to give it away to Duskleap?"

"Of coure I'm sure," said Kestrelfur. "Though I wouldn't expect Rainfoot's killer to understand." She had choked on her dead friend's name.

"Waspstar made it seem like it was for the best," said Beechwhisker, regret in her voice. She looked away. "I've... I just wish I could go back and change what I did. I-I'm sorry."

"Well, sorry doesn't bring him back from the dead."

There were a few moments of uncomfortable silence bewteen them. Kestrelfur felt her anger slowly drain away, though it never completely faded.

"So do you want me to tell Duskleap?" she asked.

"Go right ahead," said Kestrelfur, her voice flat.

Beechwhisker padded away slowly, as though waiting for

Kestrelfur to change her mind. *She's mouse-brained if she thinks I'll be leader.*

Kestrelfur waited there for a little while longer. She was reluctant to go back to camp. She didn't want to be surrounded by cats questioning her, asking more questions about Waspstar's death and why she turned down leadership.

I'll just stay here a little longer, she thought. And she did. She stayed outside of camp, in the forest, all through the night.

A/N: :

I feel really bad for Kestrelfur now :(

This book may go a little over forty-two chapters (if you forgot, earlier I said it would end sometime between thirty-something chapters to forty-two). There's not much left, though. And, yes, I have decided that there *will* be an epilogue from Waspstar's perspective.

//**Edited**

» Chapter Forty-Two «

Kestrelfur peeked put of the nursery as noise filled the camp. They were all crowded around Crowpelt, the new deputy of CloudClan. Duskstar was by his side, looking proud of his new deputy.

It had only been a few sunrises since Kestrelfur had been moved to the nursery as her kitting was drawing near. Cherrynose had indeed confirmed that she was going to have three kits.

Kestrelfur felt a little excited for kitting, but there was still an emptiness inside her.

She padded back into the nursery. A small white kit squirmed as she slept under Frostfire's fur. Frostfire had kitted only a few days ago. The kit would open her eyes soon.

Meanwhile, Pikekit and Chestnutkit were playing outside the nursery. It's easier to care for them now because they're able to eat solid food.

Chestnutkit continues to look more and more like Morningleaf as the days go by. Looking at her gives Kestrelfur a little wince of pain, but she has discovered that her personality is nothing like Morningleaf's. She's curious, adventurous, and outgoing. She even tried to sneak out of camp once!

Her brother is calmer, more practical. He's surprisingly smart and clever, and he seems to have a gift for being very perceptive.

The one thing the two littermates have in common is that they are always wanting to know more. They have an endless amount of questions and a thirst for knowledge. Kestrelfur wasn't sure which side it came from, Morningleaf's or Crookedtail's, but it didn't matter. They're not their parents. They're a whole new adventure.

Kestrelfur padded out of the nursery, heading off towards the forest. She didn't like the nursery's closed in walls. It reminded her

of her kithood with Morningleaf and made it harder to get over the grief. Every day she has been sneaking away and going out into the forest. At first it made her clanmates nervous, but they eventually got used to it.

Dewdrops sparkled from the leaves and the trees. When they fell, they glowed in the morning sun.

Kestrelfur wasn't sure where she was going, she was just walking, taking random turns. Leaves crunched under her paws, but she barely noticed.

Eventually, she found herself facing open land. The unclaimed territory, where the Star Tree and the Moonboulders lie.

She remembered the last time she had faced this territory. She had stood exactly where she was standing now, claws unsheathed, wondering what would happen once she reached StarClan. The words, *I hope StarClan will forgive me for this,* had passed through her head.

Then Badgermask had appeared and stopped her from making a fatal mistake. Now Kestrelfur was glad she had been stopped. Suicide no longer sounded like a pleasant death.

Something cold hit her nose. It seemed like a raindrop, but softer. She looked up and realized flakes of white were falling from the sky, cold and wet. Snow. The first snow of leaf-bare.

It was unexpected, as it rarely snowed. The elders had been old enough to remember a snow from when they were younger, but it hadn't snowed again since. Now it was snowing again.

Kestrelfur smiled. She stuck her tongue out and felt a snowflake hit her tongue, melting into water upon contact. She knew snow was bad for the clan, making it harder to hunt, but she liked the snow. Like a kit she started playing, running through the snow, having fun.

A/N: :

This is the second to last chapter. I have decided that the next

chapter will be the last chapter (when she finally has her kits!).

In case you're wondering why it doesn't snow, they probably live where it doesn't snow every leaf-bare/winter. Maybe Texas (that's where I live) because it doesn't snow every winter there.

And yes, this was a very short chapter.

//Edited

» Chapter Forty-Three «

Kestrelfur hadn't visited her friends' graves since they were buried, but she was visiting them today.

All of the cats Waspstar had killed and left to rot in the camp were finally given a proper burial. Kestrelfur lost track of who was buried where, but she felt something heavy in her chest knowing that it could be Rainfoot or Morningleaf who rested beneath her paws.

GladeClan had taken Firepelt's body back to their camp so they could bury it themselves, and a patrol took Stormstar's body to MarshClan.

Kestrelfur traced the earth with a claw, wondering whose body was underneath her. Cindertooth? Speckleface? Deerspots? Amberheart? Violetheart? Morningleaf? Rainfoot?

--

Kestrelfur padded back into camp, the scents of CloudClan mingled with GladeClan. She saw GladeClan warriors padding around as though they fit in. After Waspstar had died, GladeClan didn't want to go back to being their own clan, though Kestrelfur wasn't sure why. It seemed like FlightClan would last forever.

As she padded around, she saw division between GladeClan and CloudClan cats. CloudClan cats stuck together and GladeClan cats stuck together.

Kestrelfur took a piece of fresh-kill and padded back into the nursery, where she always ate. She didn't mind because she didn't have anyone to eat with anymore anyways. Usually she was quick at making new friends, but she wasn't in the mood to find more at the moment.

"Look," said Frostfire, moving her tail so Kestrelfur could get a

better view of her kit, Snowkit. "She opened her eyes!"

Snowkit's eyes were a deep kit-blue. They seemed to be soaking in everything around her, not leaving anything untouched by her vision.

"That's wonderful," said Kestrelfur with a purr.

"Do you think she can play with us now?" asked Chestnutkit.

Frostfire shook her head. "No. She has a while before she can play games with you. You two didn't even go outside the nursery until you were a moon old."

Chestnutkit scowled. "*I* would've gone outside sooner but Pikekit wouldn't let me."

"We were tiny and the other cats were huge," said Pikekit. "They could've easily stepped on us. I just wanted to wait until we got a little bigger, but you could've gone outside on your own if you wanted to."

"But nothing's fun without you!" protested Chestnutkit.

Kestrelfur smirked—the first in a while. She found it funny and cute how these kits, so tiny and only two moons old, could have arguments between each other.

--

The twig snapped in Kestrelfur's jaws as pain engulfed her.

"Don't worry," said Cherrynose, though her voice sounded tense as though she were stressed. "Just one more to go."

Kestrelfur waited and waited for the pain to stop, but it seemed to keep on going. Her sides heaved.

"Almost there... annnd it's out!" said Vixenpaw happily. "You have three kits."

Cherrynose slid one in under Kestrelfur's nose. "Start licking

him. He needs warmth."

The kit they had placed uner her nose was the tom. The one who looked like Waspstar. It made an emptiness rise inside her, but she started licking him anyway. This was not Waspstar.

Cherrynose was licking the other ginger she-cat, while Vixenpaw was licking the mottled she-cat. After a while Cherrynose said they should start suckling, so the three of them released the kits and let them latch on to suckle.

Kestrelfur let her head fall onto the moss nest, exhausted from kitting.

"Are you ready to name them?" asked Cherrynose.

Kestrelfur didn't hesitate. "Yes."

She ran through the names Waspstar had come up with. "The tom is Tigerkit."

Tigerkit was the biggest of his sisters. He had the same build as Waspstar. Kestrelfur hoped he wouldn't have the same personality.

"The mottled she-cat's name will be Alderkit."

Alderkit was in the middle of her two littermates, squirming around.

"The ginger she-cat will be named Sagekit."

Sagekit was quiet as she suckled. While her pelt looked like Waspstar's, she was the tiniest of her littermates. She didn't have the same strong build that Waspstar did.

The medicine cats leaved and Frostfire, Snowkit, Chestnutkit, and Pikekit came back into the nursery.

"Wow," said Chestnutkit, looking curiously at them.

"They're beautiful," said Frostfire. "Waspstar would be proud."

Kestrelfur winced at his name and felt guilt clawing at her. Was it possible that she could have waited to kill him until after having the kits? No, because the battle would have happened already and BrookClan and MarshClan would either be part of FlightClan or destroyed.

"Sorry," said Frostfire. "But I know he would be proud."

Would he really be proud? wondered Kestrelfur. *After what I did to him?*

Tigerkit let out a high-pitched mewl. Alderkit mewled too. Kestrelfur felt a surge of love fill her.

I did what I had to do to protect my kits. I am not alone because I have kits.

She looked out the nursery, into the rising sun. She wasn't sure what tomorrow would bring, or the next day. She wasn't sure what the kits would turn into. But for now, she was happy, and the clan was happy, and that's what mattered at the moment.

A/N: :

That's the end! But don't archive it just yet! There will be an epilogue, as well as some bonus features at the end!

//Edited

» Epilogue «

Waspstar padded around the deep forest once more, wondering what had happened. Where was he? Why would Kestrelfur kill him?

There were no stars in the sky, which confused Waspstar because he thought StarClan would be full of them.

But what confused him most was Kestrelfur. His heart ached when he thought of her. Why would she say that she loved him right before killing him? Why would she say to forgive her, if she knew what she did was unforgivable?

I thought she loved me, he thought gloomily.

There was a flicker of movement out of the corner of his eye. It seemed like a mouse. He had already figured out that these flickers mean nothing, and that there was no prey here. Still, he couldn't help but pounce in that direction, his paws landing on nothing.

I thought StarClan would be much friendlier and less... empty, he thought.

He kept going, his jaw clenched. Even though he had been killed by his own mate, he would try to look as proud as ever, even if he was broken inside.

Eventually he stopped to rest by a bush. He curled up, his tail wrapped around his paws. *Why did I die, so close to victory? Why did Kestrelfur refuse to let me help her?*

And his kits. He would have loved to meet his kits. He could have taught them how to be a great warrior and leader, the best battle moves, and the best ways to catch prey.

Are they born yet? he wondered, wanting to know. He turned his mind away from these thoughts as they filled him with sadness.

He got up again and started padding around. Walking distracted

him from the pain.

She must have been upset that I had killed so many, he thought. *But I tried to tell her that it was too late. But she didn't listen.*

His heart picked up speed when he caught the scent of a cat. So far he had seemed to be the only one here, but could there be someone else?

He followed the scent, gradually picking up speed. He hadn't realized how much he wanted to talk to someone until now. Then he slowed down, telling himself not to embarrass himself. He smoothed out his fur and pushed his shoulders back.

Eventually he saw the bright ginger fur. He forced himself not to call out to her or to start running. He didn't want to seem like a kit. He was the leader of FlightClan, after all. Or, at least, he used to be.

The she-cat saw him and started to pad over to him. She didn't seem surprised to see him, she just had a smirk on her face. Her hazel eyes had a light in them that reminded him of Kestrelfur, and he tried not to look away. His father had told him once that making eye contact with whoever you were talking to made you seem stronger.

"I am Waspstar," he said, trying to keep his voice steady. "Where are we?"

The she-cat's smirk widened. "You must be new."

Waspstar shrugged. "I'd say I've been here for nearly a moon now, but you're the first cat I've seen."

"There aren't many of us here," she said. "What did you do to get here?" Her eyes sparkled mischievously.

Waspstar felt a surge of frustration. "Where exactly *is* here?"

Her face shifted in a way that painfully reminded him of Kestrelfur. "Welcome to the Dark Forest, Waspstar."

A/N: :

It's over! Stay tuned for bonus features! Any thoughts on the story? Don't forget to comment!

//Edited

Fun Facts

[image]

Here are some fun facts for the story! I'm not very talkative, so I don't have much to say.

» **One time autocorrect corrected CloudClan to California**

» **A lot of times autocorrect would try to put an "a" in front of the characters' names. E.g. "That was fun," a Waspstar said.**

» **When I was planning the story and brainstorming warrior names for Kestrelpaw, my other two ideas were Kestrelfire or Kestrelfeather. Kestrelfur sounded best to me.**

» **When I was brainstorming warrior names for Wasppaw, my other idea was Waspclaw, but I've seen that name before in fanfictions so I chose Waspfang so it could be more original.**

» **I was inspired by Wings of Fire Legends: Darkstalker. I incorporated several ideas from it into the story. Just how Clearsight used an enchanted object to put Darkstalker, her friend, into eternal sleep to keep him from doing bad things, Kestrelfur had to do the same thing to Waspstar, except she had to kill him for real since there are no enchanted objects in Warriors. Rainfoot was also loosely based off of Fathom, being Kestrelfur's and Waspstar's friend (well, mostly Kestrelfur's) and helping Kestrelfur do the right thing. (Except that Rainfoot died and Fathom didn't.) Violetheart was also loosely based off of Indigo.**

» **Originally I hadn't planned for Cindertooth and Amberheart to die.**

» **I originally hadn't planned for Rainfoot's role to be as big as it ended up becoming. Originally, I thought Rainfoot would be more like a background character, until I decided that Kestrelfur should have feelings towards him.**

» I had originally planned on Beetlestar dying in a battle with MarshClan, but I decided it would make more sense for Waspstar to kill him.

» Waspstar never found out that Kestrelfur knows he killed Briarwing and Beetlestar.

» The Star Tree was recycled from another fanfiction I started writing (and never finished because I stopped halfway through because it was awful). However, it was used to connect with StarClan (like the Moonpool) instead of being used at Gatherings.

» At first I envisioned Kestrelfur with ginger fur.

» At first I thought Waspstar's prefix could be Tiger- but it sounded like a cliche villian name to me. Plus, his name would end up becoming Tigerstar.

» When I first started writing it I was thinking of switching between Kestrelfur and Waspstar's perspectives, but I didn't end up doing that for some reason :|

» The prologue is based on Wings of Fire Legends: Darkstalker's prologue.

» I hadn't planned on Stormstar dying, it just ended up happening 😓

» The fact that Redpaw was sent to GladeClan was a result of shuffling names. I had Redpaw and Emberpaw's names written on two separate sheets of paper and and folded them and then shuffled them. Then I randomly picked and unfolded one, and it was Redpaw's name.

» Rainfoot was my favorite character. I apologize if I made you sad for his death

» I always wanted Morningleaf to have a second litter of kits, though I wasn't sure who the father would be.

» I believe the cat who Waspstar was talking to in the epilogue

was one of Kestrelfur's ancestors. I'm thinking Morningleaf's mom, so Kestrelfur's grandmother.

» Waspstar being half-BrookClan is because Darkstalker was half-IceWing and I based him off Darkstalker. Both of them also killed their fathers.

» It is more likely than not that Cindertooth went to the Dark Forest.

» I first started this in January (2017) and finished it in April (not including the editing part). That's about three months of writing it.

» Waspstar's death was planned from the beginning.

» The second book will be about Kestrelfur's kits.

That's about it! I hope you enjoyed :3

Clan Personality Quiz

[image]

Welcome to the clan personality quiz! In here you will find out which clan you would best fit into. Are you CloudClan, MarshClan, BrookClan, or GladeClan? Try to find out!
(This is before CloudClan and GladeClan become FlightClan)

1. Which environment sounds the most appealing and comfortable to live?

A. A dense forest
B. A swampy marsh
C. On the side of a river
D. In the open fileds

2. Which prey seems most delicious?

A. A mouse
B. A toad
C. A fish
D. A rabbit

3. What best describes your personality?

A. A problem-solver
B. Hot-tempered and fiesty
C. Remains uninvolved in other cats business
D. Happy, a peace-keeper

4. You see someone hunting in your territory. You...

A. Race forward immediately and demand to know why they're hunting in your territory
B. Tear them to shreds on sight and ask them questions later
C. Approach the tresspasser calmly and ask them why they're hunting on your territory, but keep your claws unsheathed to

let them know you will use them to protect your prey
D. Pad toward them and kindly ask them to hunt in their own territory instead

5. Someone calls you mouse-brained. You...

A. Call them mouse-brained in return
B. Start shredding their pelt off
C. Ignore them
D. Take it as a compliment

6. Another cat pushes someone else into you. Who do you blame?

A. The cat who pushed the other cat into you
B. The first cat you see
C. Both of them for being mouse-brained
D. No one is to blame; it was a simple accident

7. Your leader makes a decision that you don't agree with. You...

A. Let your leader know you don't agree and kindly share your opinion on what he/she should do instead
B. Publicly announce that you disagree and wonder if your leader has gone mouse-brained
C. Say nothing to your leader, though you talk to your friends and other clanmates and let them know your opinion
D. Shrug it off; your leader knows what he/she is doing

8. Someone in your clan is spreading untrue rumors about you. You...

A. Try to find out who it is and tell them to stop
B. Get mad and stay away from your clanmates until the rumors stop
C. Just ignore them
D. Kindly tell everyone that the rumors aren't true and if they continue you'll just ignore them

9. Which name prefix sounds the most appealing?

A. Sky-
B. Swamp-
C. Stream-
D. Moor-

10. Which situation sounds the most terrifying?

A. Having a clan leader that doesn't follow the warrior code
B. Foxes and badgers attacking your camp
C. Twolegs overrunning your territory and scaring away all the prey
D. Other clans forgetting about you

11. What is the one thing you always want to do?

A. Be fair to all your clanmates
B. Make sure no one mistreats you or your clanmates
C. Bring plenty of prey to your clanmates
D. Treat others nicely, even cats from other clans

12. Which trait sounds the best?

A. Problem-solving
B. Intimidating
C. Independent
D. Kind

13. Which insult would you use?

A. Mouse-brained
B. Toad-brained
C. Minnow-brained
D. Featherbrained

14. If you could have one job, what would it be?

A. Training apprentices
B. Fighting
C. Hunting
D. Healing sick or injured clanmates

15. Your friend gets a mate. You...

A. Get excited and start shipping
B. Don't care
C. Say you're happy for them and start telling your clanmates about it
D. Feel proud for them and be encouraging

Instructions:

Now that you're done, it's time to discover your clan. Count up how many **As, Bs, Cs, and Ds** you have.

Mostly As
If you have mostly As, you're CloudClan! You like to think things through most of the time, however you also realize that there are times you just need to go with your gut instinct. In times of trouble you like to come up with unique ways to make it through. For instance, if there is no prey on the ground you simply hunt in the trees instead. Though there are times when you have to let the wild animal out of you, your clanmates understand and respect that.

Mostly Bs
If you have mostly Bs, you're MarshClan! You're more of an "attack first, ask questions later" person. You always want to make sure your clanmates are well protected and will shred other clans' pelts to keep it that way. If someone messes with you, you will make sure that you have vengeance so that things stay fair. Your concerns are more with yourself than most other people, and you don't pay much attention to other peoples' sucesses. However, you can still feel warmth towards other clanmates and you want nothing more than to keep them safe.

Mostly Cs
If you have mostly Cs, you're BrookClan! You like to stay out of things and remain more passive to other clans. If someone starts messing with you you just ignore them until they stop. You don't need other people to give you strength, for you find it in yourself. You are touchy about food and you would never want to starve. There are times when you get excited, however, and accidentally blurt whatever's on your mind. Though this can be annoying, your clanmates don't mind. They just go with the flow.

Mostly Ds
If you have mostly Ds, you're GladeClan! You are very caring to anyone, no matter which clan they're from. You always have faith in those both above and below you and you can always find compassion for someone. Though other clans see this as weakness, you see it as strength. However, the other clans', or others, rejection of you can make you feel empty inside. You always want to feel accepted so you're not an outcast. This can sometimes lead you to be bitter towards other clans, but deep down you still care for them and wouldn't like to see harm come to them.

Don't expect this to be completely accurate. Some parts in your result might be accurate, and other parts might not. This is just for fun!

My result was CloudClan, which seems right for me. I was close to getting BrookClan, and nowhere near getting MarshClan or GladeClan. ^-^

Put your result in the comments!